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ABSTRACT

The key to success in Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) programs is a philosophy of high expectations. The philosophy accommodates both client and societal concerns. Highlights of the philosophy include the following: respecting the client's goals; giving nonjudgmental acceptance, constant encouragement, and emotional support; communicating the idea that responsibility is liberating; making the program mandatory; and ensuring that work will be there at the end. Five overarching principles guide the process of bringing a high-expectations program to life: allow responsibility to flow to the information--toward line staff; invest in recruiting and training line staff; motivate with meaning and with measures; recognize "accountability drag"--and hold it down; and leadership is hard, but simple. A special implementation problem is inducing effective and efficient performance from partner agencies linked through contracts and client-referral mechanisms. Possible approaches are as follows: giving technical assistance, absorbing the risks entailed by outlays on long-lived assets, micromanagement, quantitative measures of performance, and payment for performance. The principal suggestion is to let as much of the work as possible be done by middle-manager operations specialists rather than by agency leaders. Agency contracting and purchasing staff are critical to the collaborative process and should be better mobilized to help top managers meet their program objectives. (Sixty-nine selected publications are cited.) (YLB)

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Papers for Practitioners

ED 365 832

Improving the Productivity of JOBS Programs

EUGENE BARDACH

MANPOWER DEMONSTRATION RESEARCH CORPORATION

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Papers for Practitioners

Improving the Productivity of JOBS Programs

EUGENE BARDACH

MANPOWER DEMONSTRATION
RESEARCH CORPORATION

DECEMBER 1993

MDRC

This paper was prepared for the Multi-State Technical Assistance Collaborative, an MDRC project to assist states in implementing the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) Program established by the Family Support Act of 1988.

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Eugene Bardach

Preface

This paper is one in a series of Papers for Practitioners, which was designed to supplement quantitative research results from large-scale evaluations and demonstrations with discussions of practical management and operational issues. Instead of aiming to answer the question: What are the *effects* of a policy or program?—which practitioners are certainly concerned with as a foundation for their work—papers in this series examine questions of *how best to design, implement, and improve* programs and policies.

Prompted by an interest among the funders of MDRC's Multi-State Technical Assistance Collaborative in understanding the "institutional change" brought about by the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) Program for welfare recipients, we asked Professor Eugene Bardach of the Graduate School of Public Policy, University of California at Berkeley, to bring his considerable experience studying policy and program implementation to the challenges of making JOBS work. The Collaborative—which was funded by the states of Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Michigan, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Utah, Vermont, and Virginia as well as the Ford Foundation, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Northwest Area Foundation, and The Skillman Foundation—offered advice and assistance to its state partners between 1989 and 1992 as they carried out the JOBS provisions of the Family Support Act of 1988.

The JOBS program provides a valuable opportunity for exploring issues of program productivity. When this study was launched, new efforts to help welfare recipients find work that would improve their families' economic circumstances and reduce welfare costs were just beginning. At the current time—with some advocating that, after a certain period of time, welfare end or be replaced with some form of subsidized work—increasing the success of JOBS becomes even more pressing.

Efforts to quantify the results from different JOBS approaches are under way in a number of states and in a multisite evaluation funded by the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Education. This paper was intended to be more subjective and to reflect the insights of an experienced observer. It looks at how JOBS managers create high expectations for line staff and clients, and how they extend this idea to other organizations. In doing so, it seeks to bring information from the field about the state of the art in JOBS implementation.

MDRC's mission is to identify, test, and explain programs that can improve the life prospects of the disadvantaged. Practitioners are central to this work at every stage: They conceive, adapt, and deliver the program services that, if successful, will give society's disadvantaged groups a boost into the mainstream; they enable researchers to understand the processes inside social programs by serving as guides to how such abstractions as "motivation" and "high expectations" are experienced by clients and staff; and they are the essential audience for ideas that come out of such research, because they have the ability to apply those ideas to program improvement. We hope that this paper contributes to the continuing efforts of practitioners, and policymakers, to effectively restructure the welfare system and provide opportunities for welfare recipients to better their lives.

Judith M. Gueron
President

Introduction

In June 1991 I set out with a broad mandate from the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) to learn how local Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) programs for welfare recipients might be managed more productively. The first step in any study of organizational productivity is to understand the nature of the work performed by the "lowest" level of the organization. Initially I took this level to be the welfare agency caseworkers who both deliver services to and supervise JOBS clients; however, I soon discovered that this is only partially true: the more important "workers" at this organizational level are the clients themselves. Although welfare agency caseworkers and line workers[1] serving JOBS clients from partner agencies such as adult schools can coach, inspire, threaten, cajole, and facilitate, no one but the client herself may present a cheery or scowling face to the potential employer in a job interview, solve emergency child care problems in her third week on the job, or fend off the unwanted advances of a co-worker.[2]

Indeed, even taking advantage of the various self-improvement opportunities offered by JOBS-related services—such as basic education or vocational skills training—requires substantial effort on the part of the client. While the threat of a welfare grant reduction for failing to meet JOBS participation requirements might induce welfare recipients to show up at the program site, it would not necessarily compel them to do what it takes to benefit from the program to which they were being exposed.

How do JOBS programs help clients become effective partners in their own self-improvement? The JOBS legislation is silent on this question, and it is largely up to the JOBS managers themselves to figure out the answer.[3] My own work, therefore, aims to be a resource for program managers attempting to do so.

The Contributions of Psychology and Education

The present work began with an idea validated by research in several fields, namely, that *expectations elicit performance*. All things being equal, and within certain limits, "the more you expect, the more you get." One psychologist, for instance, studied 29 platoons of combat trainees in the Israel Defense Forces. Although the platoons did not differ from one another in any systematic way, the researcher told certain platoon leaders that their troops had an average command potential

[1]"Line workers" is used interchangeably with JOBS caseworkers to refer to staff at the lowest level of the welfare or JOBS agency; these staff usually have the most direct contact with JOBS participants.

[2]In this paper I discuss almost exclusively the female clients of the JOBS program, who are 70 to 80 percent of the total in most locales.

[3]Not much in the JOBS legislative design—the congressional Family Support Act of 1988—tells JOBS administrators how to motivate welfare recipients' efforts at self-help. The threat of a welfare grant reduction is the closest thing to a prescription. But even in such cases, administrators enjoy considerable flexibility in precisely how they articulate or act on such threats.

"appreciably higher than the usual level" and that the leaders should therefore "expect unusual achievements from the trainees in your group."[4] In subsequent measures of performance, the specially designated platoons performed about 10 percent better than the comparison platoons.

Because many JOBS clients are, in effect, *learners*—that is, learning how to look for a job in addition to basic verbal, arithmetic, and "life skills" (practical, everyday knowledge)—one particularly good place to look for the effects of expectations is in the classroom. A detailed three-year study of almost 3,000 students in 12 London secondary schools found that student performance was linked to the climate of expectations in each of the schools. When teachers imposed performance demands and expressed confidence that their students would do well on national tests, the students tended to do better academically. The climate of expectations also affected student attendance and conduct, such as taking care of school property, and general delinquency.[5]

Preliminary results from an ongoing experiment in helping "at-risk" (disadvantaged) students, called Accelerated Schools, suggest a similar pattern. Administrators, faculty, parents, and students in the participating primary schools work together to establish specific goals. Participating schools are expected to "change radically," in the words of the Stanford Graduate School of Education proponents, who assist the members of each school site community. Although each school site chooses its own particular goals, a common feature of all Accelerated Schools is that they set high expectations for—and give high status to—the students. Early results have been extremely encouraging: In 1989-90, a pilot school in San Francisco had the largest achievement gain in language and the second largest achievement gain in mathematics among all elementary schools in the city.[6]

Turning to the JOBS program, I reasoned that as a first step, I should attempt to sketch a model of a "high-expectations" JOBS program. What would be its operating philosophy? How would such a program attempt to motivate client effort—that is, cause welfare recipients to take steps toward employment and self-support? How would it provide encouragement? Most important, how would it reconcile two seemingly opposed expectations: (1) humanistic and liberal expectations for a client's eventual growth and success, and (2) more conservative expectations levied on a welfare recipient to comply with program rules, get a job, and leave the welfare rolls? These questions are addressed in Chapter 1. The next step then is to analyze

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[4]See D. Eden, "Pygmalion, Goal Setting, and Expectancy: Compatible Ways to Boost Productivity," *Academy of Management Review* 13, no. 4 (1988): 639-52. See also W. T. Martin, *Motivation and Productivity in Public Sector Human Service Organizations* (New York: Quorum Books, 1988); and P. J. Champagne and R. McAfee, *Motivating Strategies for Performance and Productivity: A Guide to Human Resource Development* (New York: Quorum Books, 1989).

[5]See M. Rutter et al., *Fifteen Thousand Hours: Secondary Schools and Their Effects on Children* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979).

[6]See H. M. Levin, "Building School Capacity for Effective Teacher Empowerment: Applications to Elementary Schools with At-Risk Students" (Paper presented at the Annual Meetings of the American Eductional Research Association, CERAS, Stanford University, April 1991), p. 24.

how such a program could be brought into being, maintained, and made to run smoothly. I address these questions in Chapters 2 and 3.

One Example of a High-Expectations Program

Because I did not know in advance what a high-expectations program would look like, my search for a good example relied on a simple strategy: Find a program in which the top managers and line staff were saying something like, "We expect a lot from our clients!" and were following up this premise with what appeared to them appropriate actions. This step proved easy. The top administrators of the GAIN program in Riverside County, California, emphatically held theirs to be such a program.[7] In describing GAIN, line staff and managers repeatedly spoke of their high expectations of clients and of themselves, and their efforts to bring coherence and focus to the execution of the program made me think of Accelerated Schools, a model education research has suggested to be so promising.

Another advantage of Riverside County as a research site is that it is one of six sites in California where the GAIN program is being evaluated in a statistically rigorous manner, that is, according to an experimental design in which clients are randomly assigned to two groups that receive GAIN services and a control group that does not.[8] If the program in Riverside eventually proves effective, my exploration of its high-expectations character could be especially informative.

MDRC published a two-year follow-up study of the six GAIN counties in May 1993.[9] By the historical standards of welfare-to-work programs previously analyzed using experimental designs, Riverside has indeed been successful so far. For single parents in the research sample, the experimental group's employment rate was 16.7 percentage points higher than the control group's rate over the two years of follow-up, and its average earnings were $2,099 higher (a 55 percent increase over the control group's average earnings). Furthermore, AFDC payments to the experimental group were $1,397 lower, on average, than the amount paid to the control group (a 14 percent reduction), and the proportion of the experimental group receiving AFDC at the end of the follow-up period was 5.3 percentage points lower than the control group's rate.[10] Effects on the employment rates and earnings of two-parent families were smaller, and although welfare savings were somewhat larger, declines in welfare receipt were somewhat smaller for this group.[11]

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[7]Riverside County's Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) is a JOBS program with approximately 80 staff above the clerical level and a continuing caseload of between 5,000 and 8,000. Caseload figures are from Riverside County DPSS casefiles.

[8]The other counties are Alameda, Butte, Los Angeles, San Diego, and Tulare.

[9]See D. Friedlander, J. Riccio, and S. Freedman, *GAIN: Two-Year Impacts in Six Counties* (New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, 1993).

[10]Ibid., Table 2.1, p. 44. See J. M. Gueron and E. Pauly, *From Welfare to Work* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1991), for results of welfare-to-work programs evaluated prior to GAIN.

[11]Friedlander, Riccio, and Freedman, 1993, Table 3.1, p. 77. Among the heads of two-parent families, the Riverside GAIN program increased the experimental group's employment by 8.4 percentage points, increased their earnings by $1,174, reduced their welfare payments by $1,714, (continued...)

I should immediately enter three important cautions:

1. These are short-term results and could diminish over time, either because individuals in the control group might "catch up" with those in the experimental group or because the beneficial program effects for the experimentals could fade over time. (Of course, it is also possible that these near-term beneficial effects for the experimentals could compound themselves over time so that their differences vis à vis the controls would grow larger.)

2. Because Riverside, *relative to other JOBS programs,* emphasized rapid job placement for its clients more than longer-term investment in education and training programs,[12] its achievements conceivably could be matched or approached in the long run by JOBS programs emphasizing a longer-term-investment approach, whose advantages (if there are any) may take longer to emerge.

3. A great many conditions affect the degree to which any JOBS program's efforts are successful, and Riverside's relative success might have little or nothing to do with its high-expectations philosophy or how that philosophy is brought to life in practice.[13] It would require a much more elaborate research effort than I have undertaken here to establish the actual effects of the high-expectations approach on program results or the conditions under which it is most effective. Instead, I set out to investigate *how* Riverside (and other JOBS programs) put the high-expectations idea into practice, assuming it to be a worthy idea that may one day get a scientific test.

Other Examples of High-Expectations Programs

I do not assume Riverside to be a complete or perfect example of a high-expectations program, which is, after all, only an abstraction; no single program will necessarily embody all the features of an ideal model. This was one reason to go in search of other examples.

Another reason is that an ideal program model might—indeed, probably

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[11](...continued)
and reduced the proportion of the group on welfare at the end of the follow-up period by 2.6 percentage points.

[12]J. Riccio and D. Friedlander, *GAIN: Program Strategies, Participation Patterns, and First-Year Impacts in Six Counties* (New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, 1992), pp. 55-61. Riverside did not, however, neglect education and training. Thirty-six percent of GAIN experimentals participated in education or training activities, as many as participated in job search (ibid., Table 1.3, p. 20), and fully 60 percent of experimentals who participated in any GAIN activity at all at some point participated in an education or training activity. Riverside's lower emphasis on education and training is only relative to that of other counties.

[13]For example, the MDRC research team studying GAIN's impacts (Friedlander, Riccio, and Freedman, 1993) point to a combination of factors including the "quick job entry" philosophy, strong job development efforts, strong reliance on the program's penalty process to enforce GAIN's participation mandate, and rapid job growth in Riverside County as a potential explanation for Riverside's edge over the other five counties in the evaluation.

would—admit of more than one variant. Other JOBS programs might suggest other approaches to creating high expectations for clients and staff besides what Riverside has tried.

Third, even JOBS sites that do not offer an entire high-expectations program would probably contribute information about particular high-expectations practices—practices carried out, perhaps, by a caseworker here or a supervisor there. (I discovered this was very much the case during the course of my fieldwork.)

Finally, the question of program design is only one of two important questions for my research. I was also interested in implementation: Once you know that you want a high-expectations program, how do you proceed to carry it out? No doubt there are many ways, depending on local circumstances having to do with the strength of the local labor market, budgetary resources, the readiness of other public agencies to collaborate with the JOBS agency, civil service rules, the political climate, state-local intergovernmental relations, available leadership skills, and so on.

For these reasons I studied JOBS sites in Alameda, San Francisco, Solano, and Tulare counties in California; the two state welfare service districts in the Medford and Salem areas in Oregon; and several locations in northeastern Oklahoma. I selected the two Oregon sites because Oregon is unusually committed to administering JOBS via interagency partnerships, and the Medford district implementation process involved an interesting example of interagency collaboration (initial difficulties then followed by success). I included Oklahoma because I thought its culture relatively southern and rural. In California, I chose Tulare County because it was in a depressed rural area; and Alameda (where Oakland is located) and San Francisco because they served relatively large, urban, minority populations. As noted above, Tulare and Alameda also had the advantage, like Riverside, of being part of MDRC's six-county evaluation of GAIN's effectiveness. In most of these sites I was able to take advantage of prior contacts with top administrators that had been established by MDRC staff. Most of my fieldwork was conducted between June 1991 and May 1993; thus, the JOBS programs described in the following chapters may have changed in significant ways as well as in their details.

The variety of local implementing conditions for JOBS is great and the number of sites visited for this research is small. In addition, the local situation is always complex and requires a great deal of investigation to gain even a surface understanding. Hence, Chapters 2 and 3, describing implementation challenges and solutions, are not meant to be either comprehensive or definitive; rather, they are selective and suggestive. Even if this study were twice as large and twice as sophisticated, it would still be minute compared to the variety of actual circumstances for which a practicing manager—the primary intended audience for this paper—might seek advice.

Finally, I should emphasize what this report does not attempt, namely, global assessments of the quality of the various local JOBS programs that I visited. Not only do I not know enough about these programs to make such assessments, but for my purposes they are beside the point. Even programs that are having difficulties usually offer many instances of interesting and effective practice—and it is these positive examples that I choose to emphasize.

Chapter 1

A "High-Expectations" JOBS Program: Philosophy in Action

Joe Bftsplk, a character in the "L'il Abner" cartoon, always appeared with a rain cloud poised above his head. Wherever he went, the cloud followed. It stood both for Joe's mental state and for the expectations others would bring to their encounters with him.

If many JOBS staff had their way, JOBS clients would be followed 24 hours a day by an opposite but equally powerful icon: the image of financial self-sufficiency and a life independent of welfare. Although it might start in the minds of JOBS program staff and the program environment they can project, this encouraging image—the high-expectations image, I shall call it—would come to reside permanently in the minds of the JOBS clients as well.

How do JOBS staff create and nurture such a high-expectations image? In this chapter, I suggest that program philosophy is the key to success. The number and the persuasiveness of individuals in the client's personal environment who reinforce the program philosophy, the degree to which the client's employability is improved by participation in JOBS activities such as job search workshops, education, or training, and the degree to which jobs are available matter, too, but I focus primarily on program philosophy because it is the element local JOBS managers can most easily control. However, I shall also explain how a high-expectations program philosophy may be supported by other elements.

As stated earlier, the value of a high-expectations philosophy lies in its potential to motivate client effort. But a workable high-expectations program philosophy must do more than this. It must also respect societal interests that may sometimes conflict with client interests—for instance, conserving tax dollars and maintaining equity between the working poor (who receive neither welfare nor services) and JOBS participants. What follows is a description of a high-expectations program philosophy that accommodates both client and societal concerns. The highlights are:

- Your goals are our goals.
- You have the ability to succeed.
- Responsibility is liberating.
- You must participate in the program.
- Work will be there at the end.

Your Goals Are Our Goals

Depending on whether they were liberals or conservatives, Republicans or Democrats, pessimists or optimists, the policymakers who created JOBS had different ideas about the ultimate purpose of moving welfare recipients into the workforce: reducing poverty; promoting self-sufficiency; cutting expenditures for AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children, the nation's principal welfare

program); increasing social investment in human capital; and fashioning a new social contract between taxpayers and welfare recipients. To JOBS participants, too, the program may have many different goals—for example, improving their children's lives; having more money; having more self-respect; getting out of the house; getting free of the welfare system; and keeping the welfare check coming. In an important sense, there are as many different JOBS goals as there are individuals participating in the program. And because nothing motivates people so much as their *own* goals, JOBS staff should respect those goals as much as possible, to the extent that they involve moving welfare recipients toward eventual employment.

"How will you spend your first paycheck?" is a standard question used by line workers to motivate JOBS clients. Even if the answer is "Take the children to Disneyland" (which might seem unrealistic to the line worker), the client's capacity for invention must nevertheless be respected and encouraged: Perhaps she will take the bus, stay with relatives, or get additional money for the trip from other family members.[1]

Respecting a client's goals does not, however, imply accepting a client's choice of means. Many JOBS staff interviewed thought it their responsibility to discourage enrollment in training programs for which the client showed no aptitude. They also felt obliged to steer clients away from training for occupations for which the job market was already saturated, such as cosmetology in some areas. Such advice posed a moral and political dilemma in communities in which private occupational training schools were marketing services in ways JOBS staff believed to be deliberately misleading.

A Long-term Perspective

Client goals nearly always include financial betterment. This presents a problem for both clients and JOBS line workers in states with comparatively high AFDC grants when it becomes apparent that take-home pay may be less than the sum the recipient keeps while she is on welfare once transitional benefits such as child care run out and taxes set in. A high-expectations program may therefore emphasize the importance of financial benefit in the long run. One line worker in Riverside County communicated this perspective to GAIN clients graphically:

> I draw a line on a chart, for "welfare," going down: The governor proposes a cut in the grant; your first child turns 18; another child goes to live with her father . . . then I draw another line starting just under the welfare line but going up: You get a raise, you quit and get a better-paying job, you get a promotion. . . . Well, maybe the best the line will do is to stay flat, but unlike welfare it won't go down.

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[1] I picked up this example from Greg Newton, a Boston-based trainer who offers workshops in how to run what I would call a high-expectations program. To learn what professional trainers had to say about welfare-to-work programming, I attended two high-quality workshops of two days each. Newton's was one. The other was conducted by Cygnet Associates of Annapolis, Maryland.

For JOBS clients, a career is more motivating than the prospect of a low-wage, entry-level job that is the likely outcome of job search conducted while in the program. However, it may be hard for an aid recipient at the beginning of JOBS participation to envision the details of a career. Depending on the JOBS program philosophy, clients may not even be encouraged to try. In Riverside County, in contrast, the message to clients is: Any job is a good job, because any job is a stepping stone to some other job. According to the stepping stone theory, it is easier to look for a better job (and lay the foundations for a career) while employed than while unemployed and on welfare because prospective employers can see evidence of work discipline and will be able to evaluate references from someone who knows the applicant as an employee. Working may also make it easier to select a career: Once in a stepping-stone job, JOBS participants get a better view of their own abilities and the variety of options and challenges presented by the real world.[2]

A manager in the San Francisco GAIN program expressed a similar view: The first job won't be perfect but it will provide encouragement to stay in the labor force, to keep on looking, and to learn the norms of the working world. For many welfare recipients, moving into the world of work represents the first step in a sometimes difficult psychological transition; therefore, it might be acceptable if the first job were part time and supplemented by welfare payments.

Nonfinancial Goals

For some individuals, the distance between stepping stones may be great. To motivate clients who have little prospect of getting a good job immediately, nonfinancial goals will be important. The job club workshops in Oklahoma use a job-readiness workbook, *The Choice Is Yours*,[3] which lists seven reasons for working that are not related to improving one's financial status:

- Meet other people and make new friends.
- Set a good example for my children.
- Don't like being dependent on others for money.
- It gives me something worthwhile to do with my life.
- I feel better about myself when I have a job.
- People expect me to work.
- It will make me feel like I belong. I want to be someone.

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[2]The Riverside County formulation of the philosophy that people are better off working was influenced by Curtis & Associates, Inc., the creators of the model for self-directed job search that Riverside County adopted in its GAIN program.

[3]This book, with videotapes, was prepared by Paul E. Walker, Oklahoma state director of the JOBS program (with Richard A. Fuchs), for use within the state and for wider commercial distribution. It is one of several such training packages available. See R. A. Fuchs and P. E. Walker, *The Choice Is Yours* (Karli and Associates and The Prudential Insurance Company, 1989).

You Have the Ability to Succeed

Line staff consistently describe the AFDC recipient population as including anywhere from a large minority to a substantial majority of individuals who lack self-confidence. They also describe this as being a significant barrier to getting and keeping jobs as well as to success in an education or training program. One GAIN manager who had worked for years with the eligibility side of the AFDC program said that welfare recipients are "simply a slice of the general population with one important exception—they are people whose self-esteem is low."[4]

Many workers spoke of the high incidence of physical and sexual abuse, psychological codependency, and the complete absence of any source of "positive strokes" in clients' lives, except perhaps from their children. In many cases, long-term welfare receipt has also either created or aggravated these problems.[5] At Northeastern Oklahoma University A & M (NEO), over 200 Older Wiser Learning Students (OWLS) are enrolled in a program to earn a GED (high school equivalency) or associate's degree (AA). Most of them are JOBS participants. The program director said of them:

> When those people walk up to the registrar's window and they get one answer that's not caring and not nurturing, they will walk away . . . [they may have] dropped out in the ninth or tenth grade . . . got pregnant . . . [think] that they're no good and that all these things that they've heard and that they've told themselves [are true]. . . . They are their number one worst enemy. . . . About 20 percent have "The Look" [of bad teeth, sagging posture, unkempt clothing, home haircut].[6]

For such individuals, high expectations directed at their own estimation of their abilities can only be erected on a foundation of uncritical support. The OWLS director, Sue Stidham, explains this philosophy:

> We give them hope . . . my philosophy is that *we accept ourselves as is*. So they walk in to me and they say, "I've been married fifty thousand times and I've got a hundred thousand children," and I say, "So what, what are you doing today? . . . We do not beat ourselves to death for our past. We know we made some mistakes and as a result are wiser for now and the future." If you say, "You're wonderful and you're just so valuable and we're so happy to have you and

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[4]See T. Kane, "Giving Back Control: Long-Term Poverty and Motivation," *Social Service Review* 61 (1987): 405-19, for the persuasive argument that welfare dependency is the result of a psychological dynamic known as "learned helplessness." The academic research attempting to link long-term welfare receipt to low self-esteem has not shown positive results; see L. Schneiderman, W. M. Furman, and J. Weber, "Self-Esteem and Chronic Welfare Dependency," in A. M. Mecca, N. J. Smelser, and J. Vasconcellos, eds., *The Social Importance of Self-Esteem* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989). However, the studies reported in the literature used crude measures and crude research designs.

[5]Unemployment and frustration in previous job search efforts will also have aggravated the problem in many cases.

[6]The other 80 percent, however, were virtually indistinguishable from the rest of the student body.

> you're such a wonderful thing to have on this earth . . . ," then they start believing that and then you say, "You can learn," and then they begin to get positive reinforcement, and it can work. [Emphasis added.]

While dropout rates among the general student body at NEO are high enough to cause serious concern among the administrators, her OWLS students, Stidham says, have a much higher than average retention rate. "We just don't lose them." The OWLS participants for the most part do not live near the college campus. Since NEO is in a rural part of the state, JOBS participants need transportation; yet six of them made a special trip to the campus on a day when none had class (it was between semesters) to ensure that I understood the extent to which Sue Stidham and OWLS helped them. Each had a story to relate of a broken life mended by the OWLS program.

The same themes of nonjudgmental acceptance, constant encouragement, and emotional support were sounded in a GAIN office in Riverside County, California. As one facilitator of job club (a job search approach that emphasizes peer group support) explained:

> There's no one judging anyone here . . . we are never judgmental. . . . We could all be in a situation where we'd need some assistance . . . we sit down with people and say, "Let's dispel all the barriers, that's what we're here for." You don't have to be mean to someone for them to do the job. You flatter somebody: "Did you change your hair? I love the way you look. . . . Oh, look how your shoulders go back." We've seen changes in hard-core folks. They come back and say "I never thought I could do it."
>
> They find that they can come to us and talk to us [the JOBS staff] and there is no talking down. We're talking as equals. We're trying to address the problem that they may be having. And nine times out of ten it works. They listen. . . . They take possession of their own lives. They come back and say, "My kids like me better." They shower and have some place to go every day. They come back with their kids and the kids put the star up [on the wall, with the mother's achievements]. These may be the only positive strokes that people have had in their lives.

The principle of total acceptance applies even to communications from computers to students in basic education classes. One adult school principal in Riverside County complained about a company's software being "too much drill and kill," meaning that "You do a lesson and if you can't get it right they drill you to death . . . but that's not teaching. Those students are the very ones who dropped out of high school because of that kind of teaching. All it is saying is, 'You're a dummy and you'll always be a dummy.' It's a self-fulfilling prophecy." In contrast, her computer-based instructional program says "That's okay, we're going to try to do it another way."

Peer Support Extends the Program

Even though Sue Stidham, an individual of rare gifts, is completely devoted to her students and capable of inspiring them to put out tremendous effort to advance themselves, she is only one person, and the OWLS participants on the campus number around 200. To extend her reach and provide the kind of emotional support that only a group of peers can provide, she fashioned the OWLS into what she calls "a total support system, a true community."

> If an adult [older-looking student] comes into the Student Union alone, it's their [the OWLS'] responsibility to go over and say "Come join us." . . . If they see anybody with "The Look" . . . they're to walk up and say, "What can I do to help you?" If they can't help, then they can ask me, and if I can't help, I can ask one of the [college] counselors . . . or one of the job trainers, or one of the [JOBS] social workers . . . I've got two hundred people out there on the campus working all the time . . . I'm one person but we've got two hundred that work the system constantly.

Few JOBS sites are as well-suited to the creation of participant bonds as a small college campus in rural Oklahoma. But smaller versions of this community support system appear regularly in job clubs and in education and training classrooms. For instance, job club workshops in Riverside often make videos of participants as a way to develop their skills of self-presentation, which also become a medium for group solidarity. An Employment Service Specialist (caseworker) explains, "The videos, at the end of the third week [which is the end of the job club component], everybody claps. You keep people going, you let them have their own workshop. I don't stand up and preach. They do it together."

Peer involvement also has its negative side, however. First, if enthusiasm can be catching, so can alienation: A manager in Alameda County described the improvement in participant morale when the program shifted from enrolling mandatory as well as voluntary participants to volunteers only; a general pall of sullenness lifted overnight. Second, the achievements of the more fortunate or more talented in a group can discourage the less fortunate or less talented. As one San Francisco caseworker of long experience said, "Most of the participants that are successful have friends who have been successful. But the peer group can backfire. You get an individual who says, 'How come she has a job now and I don't?'"

The Physical Environment Sends a Message

The stereotypical welfare office waiting room offers clients hard-shell plastic chairs, linoleum flooring, government-tan walls, and not much decor aside from hand-lettered signs directing clients from one window to another. But the GAIN offices in Riverside County (as in many other California counties) have upholstered seating, carpets, color-coordinated surfaces and furnishings, a receptionist at a desk sitting in the open, and philodendron plants. An insignificant extra expense, said the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) director, but well worth it: "You treat them like kings and queens and they will act like it." He also insisted that staff wear dresses, shirts, and ties. "I didn't want them coming out in jeans and plaid shirts.

. . . I wanted it to look like a class-act employment place. I wanted a message to them [the clients] that we did all this because we think you are important." In addition, he wanted a message sent about how important, committed, and competent the *staff* would be: "I wanted a different perception in the eyes of the recipient. This was not going to be a welfare-as-usual program. I wanted them to think, 'This is a powerful group of people who can help me.'"

In one of the regional offices in Riverside the staff also kept pots of coffee available in the client waiting rooms. This was meant partly as a courtesy but also was intended to lift spirits. The regional manager had learned this idea from experts in running disaster-relief shelters where, she explained, the most urgent thing to do was to feed the victims, whether they were especially hungry or not.

Providing Sequence, Structure, and Reinforcement

The psychological support offered by an effective high-expectations JOBS program extends beyond philosophy and physical environment to the way a client moves through the steps of the program and its various components. "Social marketing" principles and techniques are used to "get clients in the door" and, once in, to keep them moving forward.[7] For instance, to get clients enrolled, involved, and participating, programs using social marketing techniques will have a JOBS worker sitting at the welfare office eligibility station with promotional material and a calendar to new applicants (or AFDC recipients) for the JOBS orientation, rather than send written notices to prospective clients in the mail.

To keep participants from drifting away and to keep their energies focused on program activities, the social marketing approach emphasizes structuring a sequence of small and challenging subgoals that are attainable given the current motivations, needs, and resources of the participant. For example: Learn to dress appropriately today and come in dressed in that fashion tomorrow; take three days to compile a list of friends who may be able to give you job leads; interview two individuals who now work in the career or profession that you feel you might be interested in. Each such accomplishment deserves to be rewarded, which can include anything from scratching off an item on a personal "To Do" list to having a celebratory party with the whole community of staff and fellow participants.

Responsibility Is Liberating

Behind the JOBS legislation is a philosophy about a social contract: You, the

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[7]The social marketing approach to public and nonprofit service delivery (P. Kotler, *Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations* [Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1975]) is more than "selling." It is putting the perspectives and wants of the client in the center of program design and working from there to matters of how services are conceived or staff recruited, and so forth. The "Your goals are our goals" element of the high-expectations program philosophy, for instance, comes directly from this approach.

Even though the image of marketing has been (and for the most part, still is) manipulation of the weak and unsuspecting by the powerful and cunning, *social marketing* implies the opposite—empowerment of the client.

client, get financial assistance while you're down and out; but we, the society, require you, by way of reciprocity, to make an effort to go to work as soon as possible. In practice, however, this is not the idea communicated to clients.

One reason is that some line workers do not believe in this idea; these are the workers that conservatives accuse of being "bleeding hearts." However, even those who believe in reciprocal responsibility do not talk about duty and obligation *to* society; they focus instead on the self-respect to be gained by becoming a fuller member *of* society. The idea is that in an individualistic society, approval and a sense of self-respect come from "taking control of your life." Viewed in this light, responsibility is not just obligation, it is also *liberation*.

A counselor for teenage dropouts on welfare in San Francisco explained that control is a big issue for teens; and shifting responsibility is a means of shifting control.

> A lot of the kids try to put it back on you: "Hey, you're the one making me go to school!" But there's nothing I can do or say that's going to make them go to school. I try to make them understand that. They've been told they are not going to amount to anything. But I tell them no, this is *their* life.

Not a few JOBS caseworkers I interviewed saw welfare dependency—and the financial straits that welfare implies—as particularly bad for women and minorities. One veteran caseworker in Alameda County volunteered:

> Women in this country are doing it all, doing everything. They're expected to have the jobs, raise money for the family, and raise the family. The only stable figures in the children's lives are the mothers. We have to make our own way out of dependency. . . . A woman told me she'd had a child when she was fourteen and her mother was doing everything. And then I realized, no, it's got to depend on me . . . I want to get a job where I can go tell the young girls that it's all up to them.
>
> And it's getting worse. Women are more despairing. It used to be that women would imagine something would happen that would take them off welfare. But not now. . . . And in the ghetto areas, things have gotten so bad now that the only thing to do is get an education and get yourself and your children out, not stay in and try to fix things.

Employment is also a way to reduce the incidence of physical and sexual abuse among women, according to many of those interviewed. They believe that the increased self-esteem and sense of independence makes women less vulnerable.[8]

Teaching the Idea of Responsibility

Not all JOBS clients understand the concept of responsibility, however. One caseworker in Riverside County accounts for this as "Things that they were taught

[8] I have been unable to find any published research that either supports or refutes this plausible hypothesis.

in childhood but forgot, or lost, or maybe never learned . . . a lot of clients have come from dysfunctional backgrounds where responsibility was never something they addressed or had to address."

One approach is to use the JOBS program setting as a medium through which to teach certain elements of responsibility. A caseworker in Riverside summarized her message to clients: "What I'm going to do for you is to teach you a better way of life . . . how to handle things better . . . to like yourself better . . . [but] you've got to show up every day and try your hardest."

Another line worker in the same program explained how he tries to structure professional relations with the client around mutual expectations:

> I'll tell them, "I'll go the whole way with you, but don't lie to me . . . I'll tell you right up front what we expect." Whenever I do a job club, I tell them, "Look, I'm going to do this much [gestures with finger and thumb apart]; but this, the majority, has to come from you."

A Riverside job club facilitator described her work with a group of alcoholics:

> They drank at lunch and they were happy as clams in the afternoons. Once I realized it I asked: "If I were your employee and came in tanked like this, what would you do?" "Well, I wouldn't put up with it," they say. So, I lost three and retained ten, and those ten got employed.[9]

Responsibility and the Development of Problem-Solving Skills

No word in the line worker lexicon is more used to describe aspects of their clients' situations than *barriers*. The main external barriers to either employment or educational advancement are well recognized: inconvenient or inaccessible child care; unreliable or inadequate transportation; health problems; jealous or threatened boyfriends; cynical friends and neighbors; wary and needy children.[10] How the line worker helps the client to lower or overcome these barriers can be critical to the success of both the client and the program.

The temptation is great for line staff to substitute their own wisdom and sophistication for the client's own effort and learning to get quick results. Caseworkers often will have genuinely useful ideas and will be inclined to share them with clients. Hastening clients toward employment, education, or training goals is consistent with line workers' primary conception of their job responsibilities, too. Clients with many unsolved problems often take up a great deal of caseworker time and energy—resources that are badly needed simply to manage large caseloads and help other deserving clients.

It may often be a mistake for caseworkers to yield to the temptation to solve

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[9]She continued: "The three have come through [the job club component of the program] twice since then, and two of those succeeded. And the last, well, maybe it wasn't the right time for that person."

[10]These barriers can acquire an internal, psychological, counterpart. "It's not that they are lazy," said an adult education teacher. "They are scared to death. No one who hasn't been in this situation of two kids, five or six dollars an hour, work all day . . . can appreciate the problem."

clients' problems for them. In the not-very-long run the client will—it is hoped—be on her own, coping by herself with many (if not all) of the same barriers that troubled her during the relatively brief period when she had access to the advice of her caseworker. Hence, in a high-expectations program it is a central tenet that the client be pushed into taking responsibility for lowering the barriers to employment or to effective program participation. One worker in Riverside said: "Yes, they do face these barriers, and they can be hard. I am sympathetic, but I do not propose solutions. At least not right away. I say, 'Yes, you are right, that's a real problem, I can see that. How do you think you might solve it?'"

The best line workers, said the Riverside GAIN director of staff development and training, are not "rescuers." They are individuals who have "a real commonsense approach to life . . . [with] very realistic views of the people they're dealing with. . . . They shoot from the hip, but in a positive way, and work for problem-solving as opposed to pointing fingers or making excuses."

Because many JOBS clients need help coping with simple everyday problems—not to mention the truly daunting barriers to employment—many JOBS programs, including Riverside County's GAIN program, offer "life skills" training. Riverside County integrates this training into their job club workshops. Other JOBS programs, such as the one in Medford, Oregon, treat life skills as a course taught under the auspices of either the local community college or the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) program.

How High Should "High Expectations" Be?

Within limits specified by law and regulation, JOBS line staff and higher-level program managers have a certain amount of discretion over how much pressure to apply to clients with regard to particular responsibilities—for example, to accept a job the client would rather reject, or to come to the office for an interview. What standards should a high-expectations program apply? Without pretending to answer this difficult question, I offer the following observations:

- The efforts of the worst-off among the working poor set one possible standard. Consider transportation barriers: The JOBS legislation says that an hour-long commute is the maximum that may be required, but line workers sometimes apply informal pressure in this area, citing the necessity faced by many people in economic hard times to take jobs in locations far away from where they live. One African-American caseworker I interviewed argued that historically, African-American women who worked as domestics made enormous exertions to reach suburban jobs, involving two-hour-long commutes by public transportation. Her view was that, especially in hard economic times, welfare recipients should be strongly encouraged to make similar efforts.

- The norms and practices of the local community must be considered. In rural Oklahoma, for example, many clients do not own cars and have no access to public transportation. But as one program manager points out, reflecting a sentiment that might be less prevalent in an inner-city neighborhood, "They can use feet, bicycles, and neighbors.

- ideas about the value and meaning of work are connected to larger cultural and religious beliefs. In a community dominated by conservative Protestant values—for instance, in rural New England or the rural Midwest—not working might be seen as an escape from social (and perhaps even divine) obligation, and stigmatized accordingly. In rural Oklahoma, however, the conservative ethos may have a slightly different effect: Work is understood to be so much better than welfare that welfare recipients are not particularly stigmatized—unless they are thought to be abusing the system. In Riverside County, where the culture may be characterized as one of tolerant individualism, welfare receipt is seen as an imposition on taxpayers and a waste of personal opportunity. In Alameda and San Francisco, socially liberal communities, caseworkers emphasized the purely instrumental value of work as a means to financial reward, sociability, and the acquisition of various skills. There was not as great a readiness here as there seemed to be in Riverside County or in rural Oklahoma to promote just any job. Placements had to be in "good" jobs—that is, jobs with "decent wages" and career prospects, jobs that clients could in some sense "enjoy." "If you put them in a job they want, they will be less likely to quit and bounce back on welfare," said one caseworker in San Francisco.

- When responsibilities conflict, expectations will inevitably be unclear. One San Francisco Bay Area caseworker observed that in the African-American culture:

  > there is a large extended family and a matriarchal figure. Sometimes we've pulled in somebody who is responsible for a very large family. They have to take care of their parents, of other older people, of nieces and nephews who might be in trouble. This is a lot of the problem we can have with middle-aged black women, and they get pulled in all directions. They say, "I know that I need to have them [the other family members] take care of themselves, and that I have to worry about myself and the rest of my life, and getting off AFDC and getting my children off. But I just can't do it all at the same time."

  Despite what the caseworker regarded as good reasons for such an individual not to participate in the GAIN program, the rules in this case did not permit deferral, and so she would "help them, counsel them, but that's all . . . and a lot of those women have ended up being sanctioned [having their welfare grants reduced]."

You Must Participate in the Program

Some managers attempt to run a high-expectations JOBS program by recruiting participants mainly or exclusively through persuasion rather than by relying on the threat of grant reductions. The Massachusetts Employment and Training (ET) Choices Program gained national attention for such an experiment in the mid-1980s.[11] Among the JOBS sites I visited, Alameda, San Francisco, and Tulare

[11]Although a formal distinction can usually be made between mandatory and voluntary participation, various forms of psychological pressure can often produce "volunteers" who are less (continued...)

counties in California leaned strongly in this direction. Nevertheless, under federal law, state and local officials may make participation in JOBS mandatory for certain groups. And even voluntary participants, once registered for JOBS, may be obliged to continue to participate, provided they are not deferred for "good cause" (and do not leave welfare or get a job). The ultimate penalty for noncompliance is being put in "sanction" status, which means having the welfare grant reduced by an amount equal to that received by the adult member of the eligible family unit.

Though in many respects JOBS is a service program like education or mass transit, it is also in many localities a regulatory program like housing code enforcement. We normally expect the clients of service programs to cooperate in the service delivery process, while we expect at least some of those in regulatory programs to offer resistance. And so it is with JOBS.

But how can the regulatory aspect of JOBS be reconciled with its service aspect, or to put it another way, how can a program that wants to be nice also be tough? Research in the administration of regulatory programs[12] points to two principles for balancing these apparently contradictory features of JOBS:

- Because the threat of sanctions (that is, grant reduction) can provoke resistance, it should be used economically.
- "Mandatoriness" is a medium for communicating norms of responsibility as well as threatening sanctions.

Using the Threat of Sanctions Economically

JOBS staff consistently reported that the threat of sanctions was used far more often to induce clients to attend the initial orientation than it was thereafter. Before attending orientation, potential JOBS clients do not, after all, know much about the benefits they might expect from the program. Hence, while overt or subtle pressure might bring them to the meeting in a resentful state of mind, the risk of using threats at this stage may be worthwhile.[13]

Another important use of threat and actual punishment, caseworkers believe, is general deterrence. A high-level manager in Oklahoma noted: "There is a grapevine.

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[11](...continued)
than willing; and variously sized loopholes that permit exemption or temporary deferral can greatly reduce the force of requirements. See R. D. Behn, *Leadership Counts: Lessons for Public Managers from the Massachusetts Welfare, Training, and Employment Program* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991).

[12]E. Bardach and R. A. Kagan, *Going By the Book: The Problem of Regulatory Unreasonableness* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982). If JOBS is not a pure service program, neither then are most regulatory programs purely enforcement-oriented. That is, such programs often must find ways to induce a modicum of cooperation from those they regulate.

[13]The threat of sanctions at this stage may also be less costly in simple financial terms. Before orientation, programs can use mass mailings to notify no-shows, whereas once a client has begun to participate, her case must be handled more individually.

If we don't carry out the sanctions, we ll lose all credibility."[14]

Mandatoriness as a Communications Medium

"The purpose of sanctions," explained a top manager in the Riverside County program, "is not to punish but to shape behavior. The people who get sanctioned are not really less motivated to be cooperative than anyone else, they're just more preoccupied with their own difficulties."[15] Even in a JOBS site like Riverside where the DPSS director has emphasized the mandatory nature of the program, formal requests for a sanction do not occur in more than 11 percent of the cases.[16] The working assumption of Riverside staff is that the great majority of AFDC recipients either want to work or can be persuaded to at least accept it. Their question is one of social marketing: How can the mandatory aspects of the JOBS program be used as part of an overall strategy to secure client cooperation in service delivery?

Although the Riverside GAIN program did not make extraordinarily heavy use of requests for sanction, it did use the conciliation process much more extensively.[17] The conciliation process—that is, official notification of failure to participate and a demand for improvement which, if not met, could eventually lead to sanction—carries a certain emotional charge. As one caseworker in Riverside County remarked, "They have to have some kind of disruption in their lives to face up to some responsibility."

In a sense, conciliation anchors the farther end of a continuum of supervision intensity which, at the nearer end, offers simple interventions such as telephone calls, mailed notices, and home visits. Riverside's relatively high rate of conciliation suggests that the other means of supervision were also used frequently.[18] Riverside GAIN staff were articulate about the importance of constant supervision through means less severe than sanctioning. "Contact! . . . Once a week, twice a week, there's

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[14]For deterrence purposes, credibility depends on appearances rather than reality, of course. In addition, credibility might not need to be so high if the magnitude of the penalty were substantial. However, many line workers I interviewed complained that for the subgroups of clients who were uncooperative or unresponsive the sanctions were too light to induce much compliance. Only the portion of the grant for use by the recipient herself was removed, while the portion available for the children was left intact. Moreover, it was said that the deterrent value of a process that typically dragged on for weeks or even months was substantially weakened.

[15]In addition, this manager said, they may be "testing limits" to see how little they need to cooperate before staff will start pushing back.

[16]This was the figure for the single-parent recipients. It was about 15 percent for sample members in the AFDC-U (two-parent) program (Riccio and Friedlander, 1992, pp. 64, 71-73). It should be noted that, for both groups, only about half the requests for sanction actually eventuated in sanctions. In some cases, recipients proceeded to cooperate once the prospect of sanction became imminent; in others, participants left the welfare rolls. See Riverside County Department of Public Social Services, "GAIN Sanctions in Riverside County" (Report prepared for Lawrence E. Townsend, Jr., Director, May 1992).

[17]About 34 percent of the AFDC-FG group and 42 percent of the AFDC-U group were "in conciliation, slated for sanctioning . . . or actually sanctioned," according to MDRC's study (Friedlander, Riccio, and Freedman, 1993, p. 133).

[18]I do not, however, have an independent measure of whether very high rates of contact actually occurred.

no such thing as too often," said one Riverside supervisor; "it reminds them that you *care*, and that you're *watching*." The Riverside County DPSS director put it succinctly:

> I studied some our top-performing counselors, the first ones that broke the "legendary record" [of getting 30 job placements a month]. It's really simple: you've got to be all over every client like flypaper! Every day. "Okay, you said yesterday you were going to do this and this, what have you done today? . . . Are you going to go see this employer today like you said or not?" [As for education,] the first thing is that they have to be in class. Cut through the excuses for not being there . . . work on their attitudes for actually being there.[19]

The Implications of Mandatoriness for Program Productivity

How a program uses the direct or indirect pressures of official requirements to help individual clients is secondary to whether it chooses to use these pressures very much at all. Leaving aside for the moment the philosophical dimensions of the choice itself, let us briefly consider whether extensive mandatoriness increases a program's productivity. Weighty arguments can be found on both sides.

On one hand, mandated participants are, on average, likely to be more resistant; and more resistant clients will very likely be more difficult to serve. They require more reminder letters, follow-up phone calls, rescheduled appointments, notices of potential discipline, and memoranda to their files regarding one exceptional occurrence after another. They probably face more difficult barriers to employment, education, and training than other clients and may therefore require line workers to think harder about what advice to offer (or withhold). They are more likely to attempt to "game the system"—for instance, by dressing inappropriately for interviews so as to discourage a job offer—and may therefore require more self-conscious monitoring, including home visits. Their presence in group settings with other JOBS clients may be demoralizing and may encourage resistance among hitherto cooperative program participants. Altogether, they may impose considerably higher levels of stress on JOBS line workers.

On the other hand, the more resistant clients may also be those who have been receiving aid for the longest period or who may have lost the skills or desire to succeed in the job market.[20] Without the boost of JOBS, their prospects for success could be very dim indeed. In addition, owing to their lower prospects of success, the prognosis for long-term welfare dependency in their case implies cumulatively large government aid expenditures. Finally, if the alternative to serving the most resistant is to serve the most cooperative, the JOBS program may simply be helping those who would have been most prepared psychologically and practically to

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[19]M. L. Chadwin, J. J. Mitchell, and D. S. Nightingale, "Reforming Welfare: Lessons from the WIN Experience," *Public Administration Review* (May-June 1981): 372-80, in their study of 241 Work Incentive (WIN) programs, found that higher-performing programs were more apt to counsel uncooperative clients as opposed to simply imposing sanctions in a routine way.

[20]See D. Friedlander, *Subgroup Impacts and Performance Indicators for Selected Welfare Employment Programs* (New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, 1988).

succeed on their own. Arguments along these lines therefore make mandatoriness into a sort of targeting strategy.

Work Will Be There at the End

A client's enthusiasm for participating in even the most upbeat JOBS program will surely be dulled if she cannot see a job at the end of the road. Of course, finding a job as she nears that point must be principally the client's own responsibility. But in a moderately or severely depressed labor market, the JOBS program itself may need to provide extra help.

The Tulare County JOBS staff seem to share most of the philosophy so far described here as high expectations.[21] Yet unemployment rates in this rural community have been high (for example, about 16 percent in July 1991–June 1992), and staff tend to emphasize program components other than job search. They encourage clients to go to school and work toward their GED certificates or even for an AA degree. They also have developed a moderate supply of high-quality unpaid Community Work Experience (CWEP) slots in nonprofit or public service agencies, positions in which clients are given an opportunity to learn the basic routines and skills of the work world. My interviews with staff suggest that their morale was high and that they believed many program participants would be successful in the job market in the long run.

However, these indirect routes to eventual employment cannot, on the whole, be as satisfactory for clients or for society as the same routes with a paying job as the final destination.[22] In circumstances less adverse than those of Tulare County it might make sense for the JOBS program to invest in *job development*, by which is meant (1) persuading employers to look more favorably on JOBS clients than they might have done otherwise, and (2) facilitating a client's access to the head of a particular employer's applicant queue.

Although job development is a federally mandated element in a JOBS program, local programs have great discretion as to how much they may invest in this function. Riverside County had about 8 percent of its staff resources assigned to this function. San Francisco had 1.5 of its 21 staff positions allocated to job development,

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[21]One important exception is that Tulare does not believe in using formal enforcement to encourage compliance.

[22]MDRC studies of Community Work Experience programs in several sites in the mid-1980s found that the great majority of participants liked their jobs and thought the "workfare" aspects of the placement ("working off" the value of the welfare grant) were fair. Supervisors and participants alike overwhelmingly stated that the work itself was useful to the agency rather than simply "make work." See G. Hoerz and K. Hanson, *A Survey of Participants and Worksite Supervisors in the New York City Work Experience Program* (New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, 1986); D. Friedlander et al., *West Virginia: The Demonstration of State Work/Welfare Initiatives* (New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, 1986). My own interviews with program managers in San Francisco, Oklahoma, and Oregon, supports the position that a well-managed Community Work Experience component can indeed be valuable both to participants and to the host agency. However, because the competitive marketplace supplies a more impersonal evaluation both of the value of the job being offered and the performance of the employee, in my view private sector jobs are to be preferred.

but was trying to add another three positions in the near future.[23] Most of the programs I visited had devoted less resources than Riverside to job development.

Successful job development requires learning the needs of the employer community, working hard at satisfying them, and drumming up contacts with entrepreneurial vigor, such as calling your mother-in-law's bridge partners if you think job leads may be found there.[24] The director of Riverside's GAIN program reports that when she asked a group of experienced job developers, "What have you tried that doesn't work?" the reply was "You never know what's going to work. You can put a lot of effort into something and have it fall through at the last minute. It's like selling real estate. If it doesn't work this time, maybe it will work next time."

In the case of JOBS clients, the ordinary methods of job development may need to be supplemented by extraordinary measures aimed at simply helping clients *physically* get to interviews. In rural parts of Riverside County the GAIN program used its own vans for this purpose (and for other purposes as well).

A fairly consistent answer to inquiries about what could be done to make the program better was "More attention to job development." This response came from managers as well as line workers. My own view is that it is unfair to clients and wasteful to society if a JOBS program that invests intelligently in all the other features of a high-expectations program fails to ensure access to at least a minimally adequate job market, even if that market needs to be stimulated by the actions of job developers.[25]

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[23]Another position was devoted to developing CWEP-type positions.

[24]A comprehensive "how-to" guide to this task is S. R. Connor and M. B. Pelletier, *The Handbook for Effective Job Development: Placing the Hard-to-Employ in the Private Sector* (Scarsdale, N.Y.: Work in America Institute, 1981).

[25]A counterargument can be made that too much effort by job developers indirectly undermines client self-help efforts; this is true, but so too does too little effort.

Chapter 2

Bringing a High-Expectations Program to Life

There is no simple prescription for how to run a high-expectations JOBS program, given the great diversity of local circumstances. It may not be possible to mount such a program in every locality, or even desirable, when money is scarce and more crisis-oriented social services programs have a more urgent claim on the available resources. However, for managers who choose the high-expectations approach this chapter offers five overarching principles, based in part on what I observed in various JOBS program settings[1] and in part on a powerful idea emerging in the academic and popular literature on managing service organizations.

First, the management idea: Do what it takes to help the front-line service workers do their jobs effectively. For private-sector organizations this concept is effectively conveyed by image of an *inverted pyramid*—an image that turns on its head the traditional organization chart that puts managers in large boxes at the top and front-line workers in numerous small boxes at the bottom, based on authority relationships. By contrast, the inverted pyramid describes who ought to be *giving and receiving help* in an effective service organization, with customers at the top of the hierarchy of those who should receive, and just below them, the front-line workers who actually deliver the services. Senior management falls at the bottom of the pyramid, since they provide help (albeit indirectly and via such abstract functions as budgeting and planning) to virtually everyone else in the organization.[2]

With slight modifications, the inverted pyramid also fits public-sector organizations, including those that serve JOBS clients.[3] The five principles are:

1. **Responsibility should flow to the information—toward line staff.** Senior management should define the organizational mission and goals, but the responsibility for methods and means should rest with those workers who are closest to the problem—that is, who have the most information about the "operational" situation.

2. **Invest in recruiting and training line staff.** While line workers in a high-expectations JOBS program are not, strictly speaking, professionals, they are more

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[1]I have omitted from this discussion JOBS programs that depend heavily on services provided by other organizations under contract (contract services are discussed in Chapter 3).

[2]K. Albrecht, *At America's Service: How Corporations Can Revolutionize the Way They Treat Their Customers* (Homewood, Ill.: Dow Jones-Irwin, 1988), pp. 105-9.

[3]D. Osborne and T. Gaebler, *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit Is Transforming the Public Sector* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1992), esp. Chapter 9. A more sophisticated interpretation of how government organizations should work in the service age can be found in M. Barzelay, *Breaking Through Bureaucracy: A New Vision for Managing Government* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992). Barzelay describes the "post-bureaucratic paradigm" of organizations, which stands on its head Max Weber's model of the programmably rational, hierarchical, rule-applying, compartmentalized bureaucracy. By contrast, the post-bureaucratic model is adaptable, relatively "flat," results-oriented, and customer-oriented.

than clerks or bureaucrats; one might call them craftsmen. Their tasks are subtle, complex, and subject to standards based on morality, law, and practicality. The line workers make the difference between ordinary program results and truly superior results. A high-expectations JOBS program should be creative in its approach to recruiting line workers and invest wisely in training them.

3. **Motivate with meaning and with measures.** Like most craftsmen, JOBS line staff can find meaning in their work that motivates them to put forth effort. Properly implemented, the first two principles should help increase this sense of meaning and, therefore, motivation as well.

   However, unlike most craftsmen, JOBS line staff also happen to work for large, formal organizations. Thus, their work improves when it is assessed against challenging, measurable, and fair performance standards.

4. **Recognize "accountability drag"—and hold it down.** Public welfare agencies spend taxpayer money. They spend it on programs and on behalf of people that in some political quarters are very unpopular. These agencies are necessarily obsessed, therefore, with accountability. Administrative systems invented to impose accountability at times impair program performance, but creative managers can find ways to decrease this "accountability drag."

5. **Leadership is hard, but simple.** There is no good substitute for executive leadership. But in the JOBS program the critical functions of leadership are surprisingly few and consist mainly of (1) defining and legitimating challenging goals, and (2) persuading people that success is in fact possible.

Responsibility Should Flow to the Information—Toward Line Staff

One JOBS line worker expressed appreciation for her "unusually good" supervisor who, being "pro-client," allowed her to spend agency funds on job interview clothing for her clients. But why didn't the line worker have the responsibility to make such a decision in the first place?

Like all organizations, a welfare agency is structured to protect policymakers' capacity to define the organization's mission and goals. In light of the tension found in many public welfare programs between the goal of serving clients and that of regulating their behavior, a hierarchical structure that limits the discretion of line-level workers makes sense.

However, this is not the best structure for running a high-expectations JOBS program. The principal reason is that workers at the bottom, and not policymakers at the top, control a valuable resource—namely, information—that the organization must exploit to its fullest if the program's high expectations are going to be on target and converted into productive client effort. This information concerns the complex and fluid relationship between the client's efforts, desires, and capacities on one hand and the constellation of employment, education, and training opportunities afforded by the local environment on the other.

Besides being useful, decentralization is also feasible. It is possible to keep control at the top over the organization's defined mission and goals and to promote this

definition downward throughout the organization by means of recruitment, training, the construction of appropriate quantitative measures of performance, and constant communication.

Mission, Goals, and Communication

"Jobs, jobs, jobs," is the motto of Riverside County DPSS Director Lawrence Townsend, who believes that welfare savings is the name of the political game and that the only way to win it is to make rapid job placement the prime goal of the program. Moreover, he sold his top staff and most of his agency—albeit slowly and against a certain resistance[4]—on this mission and goal.

Responsibility for communicating the overall organizational strategy and the evolving set of implementing policies is perhaps best vested in one person. In Riverside County this fell to the GAIN program manager, Marilyn Kuhlman, whom Townsend described as a talented and energetic communicator. She personally attended constant rounds of staff meetings and encouraged that her regional managers do the same.

However, it is not always so easy to define the JOBS mission and goals, and a high-expectations program need not emphasize immediate job placement. Labor market conditions and the availability of training resources (or lack thereof) can complicate the task. GAIN staff in San Francisco argued that a very competitive labor market in their area made it impossible for their clients to get jobs at all without a good deal more education and training.

An emphasis on education and training as a means to a job may dovetail with the objective of preparing clients for a "good" job—that is, a job with good pay, good career opportunities, and a good match with clients' preferences. Line staff in Alameda and San Francisco counties were more inclined toward this goal than staff in other sites I visited, reflecting a relatively liberal political culture of the Bay Area and the policy preferences of advocacy groups that influenced the GAIN programs in these counties. Any attempt by managers in these counties to speed up job placement by broadening the definition of a "good" job would clearly entail prolonged discussions with these advocacy groups.

Institutional interests and perspectives can also affect the definition of the JOBS goals and mission. In Oregon, for instance, the JOBS program is carried out by partnerships of organizations and organizational leaders. These partnerships exist at the state level and the level of 15 service districts. The Oregon welfare agency, Adult and Family Services (AFS), gives money to a prime contractor in each district. In eight service districts, the prime contractor is a community college district; in six, it is the JTPA entity; and in one (the Medford district, described at length in Chapter 3), it is a consortium of JTPA, the local community college, and the state Employment Division.

The program philosophy in Oregon is deliberately flexible, so that various state and local partners can work out mission, goals, and detailed policies consensually.

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[4]For further details, see the discussion on meaning and motivation later in the chapter.

The basic JOBS charter, "Local Planning Guide: Jobs for Oregon's Future," uses broad formulations such as:

> [E]ffective employment placement and job retention must be the common goal of our local programs, by successfully matching participants with education and training that will lead to employment.
>
> Yet we must be flexible in how we measure our success. We seek employment for our clients in jobs or careers that will, at a minimum, support families at the poverty level with health benefits. Nevertheless, due to labor market conditions, some clients may not be immediately able to find jobs that eliminate their dependence on public assistance.

The belief in Oregon is that while programming by consensus is difficult and time-consuming, the political and operational results will justify the investment in the long run.

Giving Scope to Subordinates

Once a system for defining and communicating the organization's overall mission and goals is in place, along with a system for holding workers accountable for results,[5] line workers are free to use their imagination and energies to focus on the means. The Riverside GAIN program did this at the conceptual level, though workers did report that violations in practice occurred. One of the regional managers explained.

> It is very simple. You just have a goal [job placement]. You focus on the goal. You hire staff that are intelligent, creative people and you tell them this is the goal, this is where we need to be. Now find a way to get there. We don't have an elaborate way of teaching people how to deal with getting clients jobs. We say, "Find the best way that works for your caseload, and use it."
>
> When we're having a real slow month, we all get together and say, "Okay, what can we do to pick up these job placements?" We are very informal here about who can have the best ideas. . . . Our receptionists have brought in some [and so have] . . . other people in the office . . . they are all part of the process.

And of course, what applies to the lowest-level workers also applies to upper-level managers. As the Riverside DPSS director said of his hand-picked senior managers: "I had the planner reporting directly to me in the planning process. Then I let them handle it. I did not let up on my expectations. I showed the interest and kept communicating with them. But I gave them the opportunity to try what they wanted to try."

Learning from Everyone's Experience

The experience of line staff should also be used to improve what welfare agencies often call "policy"—that is, forms and procedures.

In Riverside, although the GAIN manager and three regional managers act as an

[5]For more accountability, see the discussion on meaning and motivation later in the chapter.

executive committee in deciding on policy, they solicit feedback on proposed policies from all program staff down to the level of line supervisors, who in principle are supposed to assemble feedback from the Employment Service Counselors (that is, caseworkers and line staff). These supervisors could then make comments, by mail or by phone, directly to the headquarters official responsible, even bypassing their regional managers if they wished.

Although I did not observe this practice in any of the sites I visited, educating line staff to place their own operational concerns in a broader organizational perspective would probably help increase the quality of their reactions and their suggestions.

Healthy Effects on Morale

Respect for staff ideas and opinions does more than improve the substance of policy, it also keeps up morale. At the end of their training period, new staff in Riverside GAIN were sent out with instructions to report back what was working and what was not. "In the beginning, we had no clue what we were doing," said the staff development director. "We said, 'Jim [the compiler of policies], if you write it, we'll train it.' And we told the staff, 'If it's not flying, let us know and tell us something better.' And we got an immense amount of feedback." Expanding on the benefits of feedback, the staff development director continued:

> Also, a lot of buy-in . . . people at every level. . . . The program was never just one person. People here still feel the program is pretty special. They get a lot of recognition for the effort they put in. It's all that stuff they talk about in the textbooks that you never thought anybody really does.

Invest in Recruiting and Training Line Staff

Recruiting and Selecting JOBS Staff

"There are three principles for running the GAIN program," said the DPSS director in Riverside, "selection of staff, selection of staff, and selection of staff." He could well afford to think so. When Riverside first advertised its new GAIN Employment Service Counselor (ESC) positions, the program received applications from 3,000 individuals; out of this pool 12 were hired.

The Riverside County DPSS director wanted role models, "positive people who believe in themselves, have a track record, have confidence," he said. "These have got to be genuine winners . . . who breathe that through their pores and get the clients to actually believe that they too can do it." How were they to find such people? One early method of eliciting this kind of information was to have candidates for GAIN staff positions role-play someone trying to sell his or her used car to a stranger.

Of course, the rules and classification schemes of the local or state government personnel system must be either adhered to, circumvented, or changed. How accommodating that system will be depends on many factors, one of which is the

level of determination on the part of JOBS managers. Said Riverside GAIN program manager,

> If we interview from a list and don't find the right person, we send the list back without hiring. This has led to requests by Personnel that we justify why we aren't hiring from a qualified list. I just give them a memo saying I was looking for this, this, and this in a candidate and didn't find it. . . . Even in a bureaucracy, if something means enough to you, there are ways of getting it done. . . . You just have to know what you want and not settle for less.

Riverside managers were so concerned with canvassing the largest possible domain of potential recruits that they were willing to downplay formal education as a job requirement. Of six California counties studied by MDRC, Riverside had the second lowest proportion of bachelor's degrees on their staff (43 percent).[6]

Riverside had the luxury of hiring ESCs without serious constraints from civil service or a union.[7] Not all welfare agencies have such freedom. In an organization bound by union rules, the JOBS manager typically must choose from among three job candidates inside the agency who volunteer and are identified, in accord with the union contract, on the basis of seniority. In some welfare agencies, candidates for JOBS positions may also be limited to the existing cadre of "service" workers in the welfare agency—that is, from adult services or children's protective services units—excluding the agency's eligibility workers, who typically lack a bachelor's degree. And given the high-stress, crisis-oriented work of protective services or the high-production demands of eligibility work in welfare agencies, some inside applicants for JOBS positions may simply be seeking an easier job.

Of course, a JOBS manager could try to encourage applications from the more able and committed line workers, as did one JOBS office I visited, and the results were so apparent that one of the contract training providers in the area made it a point to solicit this office for client referrals.

Encouraging and Instructing Unconventional Sources of JOBS Line Workers

In looking for effective line workers, JOBS managers should think beyond the standard boxes on their personnel charts. In Tulare County, California, the Office Assistants—that is, secretaries and clerks—were semi-officially part of the GAIN (JOBS) teams. "My OA was as important to me as the case manager," said one former office manager. In Riverside County, secretaries and clerks were strongly

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[6]Riccio and Friedlander, 1992, p. 53.

[7]In many of the sites I visited, principals of adult schools offering JOBS clients remedial education are in a similar situation: They employ nontenured, non-union, short-term-contract teachers almost exclusively. If the teachers perform well they are usually rehired; if they do not, after suitable coaching to try to improve their performance, they are simply dropped. Furthermore, within rough limits it is possible to predict whether the candidate has the right interpersonal skills for the job. As one principal described her method, "I let them go spend time in a class in progress where the teacher is badly overloaded. If they don't end up just naturally pitching in and helping out, they're not for us."

encouraged to act as informal job developers as well as to be part of informal client support teams.

It is possible to think of the employer, too, as a kind of line worker. Once a client is placed in a job, her prospects for keeping it and eventually being promoted may very well depend on her experiences with her peers and immediate supervisor. Therefore, it may be worthwhile for case managers or job developers to search out employers who can act as coaches and mentors during the early phases of a client's employment, and perhaps even educate them somewhat about how to do so. This is the approach sometimes taken when making unpaid Community Work Experience placements; unfortunately, it is often difficult to find this sort of cooperative employer in such cases and the task is likely to be even harder in the regular job market.

Employers can contribute to the creation of a high-expectations environment in another way. In cases where they interview but do not hire a JOBS-referred applicant, employers can act as a source of information about the client's interview demeanor, skills deficits, or particular strengths. Such information can be useful if an employer-provided diagnosis of skills deficits helps motivate a client to get more education, or if there is any suspicion that he or she is "gaming the system" by deliberately sabotaging the job interview.

Volunteers are another excellent source for recruiting line workers. The principal of the Palm Springs Adult School in Riverside County organized a group of volunteers—drawn principally from the vacationing "snowbird" population that frequents this resort community—to tutor remedial education students. She obtained a small grant to train the volunteers how to "make learning exciting . . . [and] more personal." The volunteers started out by agreeing to work two hours a week, but many became so involved that their commitment over time increased to twenty hours a week; they developed an esprit de corps and celebrated their work with an awards dinner.

Recruiting Senior Managers

The DPSS director in Riverside chose his four top managers—one GAIN director and three regional managers—with great care. All are "stars," he asserts proudly, and all have very different personalities. "I put together a management team that was a deliberate mixing of chemicals." One, he said, was a top production person, very competitive, who would challenge others to higher performance; one had an outstanding administrative record running the agency's eligibility determination unit; one was a planner who had been close to the GAIN legislative process; and one had managed a business. "I did it with the greatest care, so they'd play off against each other for the ultimate goal of achievement . . . so you have different viewpoints. I wanted them to heavily discuss this new program . . . what's working and what's not. I didn't want them to be think-alikes."

Staff Training

By all accounts, the Riverside GAIN program had a highly unusual training unit. The program probably spent somewhat more on training, particularly in service

delivery, than most social service agencies. But it is certain that the quality of the training was unusually high. Line staff were full of praise about their experiences and described the director of the training unit in glowing terms, all of which represented a deliberate investment strategy. "If you put people out in the job without training, and you have to go around behind them fixing up their mistakes, that's more work in the long run," argued the DPSS director. "That's a hidden expense that doesn't show on the books. It costs us bad morale, damages our client services, and doesn't make us look very good. I have no plans to ever cut back [on staff development] regardless of fiscal crisis."

However, what made the Riverside staff development unit most remarkable was its integration into an overall program support system. Its assigned function was not merely to deliver training but also help the executive team revise and improve policies, contribute to the program-wide sense of staff ownership, help design and participate in the staff recruitment process, and maintain a culture among its employees of continuous self-improvement (both for their own development and to augment the talent pool from which promotions were to come). This integration into the larger life of the organization could only be accomplished if the training unit director had open communication channels both to program managers and to the line workers in the field. Having the training director report directly to the DPSS director ensured that the first condition was met; the second was met by a combination of history, persistence, and commitment. Said the training director of the staff development unit, "Many of us have been a part of the department for a while, so we are already recognizable, they know who we are, we have connections with the line."

Motivate with Meaning and with Measures

Meaningful Work

Other things being equal, meaningful work motivates work effort better than more ordinary work, and JOBS staff have many reasons to think their work meaningful.[8] A Riverside job club facilitator glowed about her work: "I love this program . . . it's helping people, it's reaching people, it's treating people in a very fine manner." The Riverside DPSS director wanted her to feel that way. He speaks with passion about the program to anyone who will listen:

> We would talk about what happens when we get [clients] into believing better about themselves, realizing that they actually have some abilities, the impacts on the number of people actually affected by our program. It gets so exciting that it's hard to keep our feet on the ground in a staff meeting . . . it's a really crucial and amazing program! To have the opportunity, and honor, to try and run a program like this—you don't get it very often!

Does he think GAIN staff will be as motivated as he himself is? Yes, provided the challenge is great enough:

[8]See E. Deci, *Intrinsic Motivation* (New York: Plenum, 1975).

> A lot of people look for a noble goal and a vision to go after. . . . If it's something that's going to be that memorable, it has to be something that's considered at first as being impossible, frightening . . . first elicit a negative reaction, cause minor terror—but that if they did it, they would be happy for a long time.

Bringing staff to this level of enthusiasm may not be easy. When I began visiting Riverside in the fall of 1991, staff commitment to work seemed high, but it was not always so. As recently as February 1990, staff surveys showed widespread dissatisfaction. Only 45 percent scored "high" on a scale measuring the degree to which they believed the program could help clients, about the same proportion who scored "high" on a scale measuring staff morale and job satisfaction.[9] It is likely that most staff initially resented the DPSS director's emphasis on rapid job placement at the apparent expense of education and training. One line worker said, "When the program first started, I thought it was good—we would be giving clients school and vocational education. I would be counseling clients. Then I found that we were pushing them into jobs. I'm somewhat disillusioned. I'd like to work more with clients."[10]

The staff survey data from this period of high discontent probably reflect, in part, the fear and anger arising from the introduction of quarterly job placement standards for the ESCs and an underlying dissatisfaction on the part of a fair number of them with the director's program philosophy. Not surprisingly, some of the ESCs resigned, with the encouragement of management. By December 1992, management reported that the staff had bought into the Riverside program philosophy to the point that ESCs were complaining that they were not allowed to place clients who were not making educational progress in jobs.

Job Design

For many line workers, a program's "noble goal and vision" will come to life only through the experiences of individual clients. Therefore, designing line worker jobs so that they may see the fruits of their efforts is one way managers can increase their motivation.

This is easily done for caseworkers (known in Riverside GAIN as case managers) and perhaps for job club leaders, adult education teachers, and occupational skills trainers; job developers can present a problem, however. In some communities, economies of scale might dictate that job developers be organized centrally and cover a wide geographic area. Centrally-based job developers might not identify with either the particular clients (who necessarily would be anonymous) or field-based caseworkers. In some settings it therefore may be worthwhile to sacrifice economies of scale in exchange for the motivational benefits of assigning job

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[9]Riccio and Friedlander, 1992, p. 69. Almost the same percentages were recorded in similar staff surveys in Alameda County, where 45 percent scored "high" on the first scale and 43 percent scored "high" on the second scale. However, these percentages were exceeded by San Diego (61 percent and 64 percent, respectively), Butte (72 percent and 70 percent, respectively), and Tulare (77 percent and 72 percent, respectively).

[10]Ibid., p. 70.

developers to teams of caseworkers and in some sense to the clients themselves. The caseworkers and clients in effect would be the "customers" of "their" job developers. Ideally, the job developers would be attached to only one or a small number of offices.

Riverside experimented with several ways to integrate job developers into the GAIN organization and settled on attaching one job developer to each unit of six or seven Employment Service Counselors under one supervisor. Although job developers attached to different units share job orders (descriptions of job openings) throughout the entire regional office, each unit competes as a team with other units for semi-annual awards for job placement achievements. San Francisco attached its group of two job developers to the GAIN office as a whole, which employed 18 caseworkers, on the theory that co-location of the entire GAIN staff would be sufficient to give them an officewide sense of loyalty and identification.

The question of how to team job developers with other line staff is also complicated by the desirability of teaming them with employers because employers who learn to trust particular job developers are more likely to rely on them for recruitment services. This is complicated further if the job developer is housed not in the welfare agency but in a cooperating agency such as the state Employment Service or a JTPA contractor, agencies that traditionally have shunned welfare recipients as frustrating, hard-to-place clients who are too costly and might weigh employer interests a little too heavily in the balance. Of course, the entrepreneurial vigor required for successful job development may not arise naturally within the state or local welfare agency and is one reason many JOBS agencies prefer to rely on JTPA contractors and the state Employment Service for job development.

Camaraderie

An effective high-expectations program environment staffed with people who are proud of their work and successes will also inspire staff camaraderie. Moreover, camaraderie can feed back into increased productivity by inspiring staff to sustain and intensify their efforts, and for this reason managers should encourage it. In the Western regional office in Riverside County, staff held potlucks every other month, attended parties at the home of the regional manager several times a year, went out to restaurants together, and planned group vacations. When I visited, Riverside staff were planning a year-long series of fundraisers to send as many as 50 people from the office, including clerical personnel, on a weekend cruise the following Christmas.

Setting Measurable, Challenging, and Fair Performance Goals

The administrative culture of public welfare agencies encourages the use of quantitative performance measures (for example, the error rate in eligibility determination, the number of sanctions applied for noncompliance with the rules of various programs, or the number of cases processed in a given period). In employment programs, common measures of performance are the number of clients placed in employment per month or per quarter; the average wage of clients entering employment; and the percentage of employed participants still on the job after 90 days. For JOBS programs, additional performance measures typically

include the number of clients leaving the welfare rolls owing to employment as well as the percentage of clients meeting the federal standard of "participation" defined for reimbursement purposes (75 percent attendance in a program scheduled for an average of 20 hours per week).

Some performance measures in the JOBS program also incorporate standards of what is minimally acceptable. Unlike most other programs, Riverside GAIN does this for individual staff as well as for district offices or regions. Regarding monthly placements, for example, Riverside holds 12 to be the standard, and defines 20 as "exceeds standards." The research literature is unambiguous about the contribution of defined, measured, challenging goals to motivating and channeling effort, especially when accompanied by feedback.[11] The literature also suggests specific approaches to—and certain warnings about—setting very challenging goals and increasing workers' commitment to achieving them. For example, top management can assign tough goals, and if management is trusted and the goals are reasonably achievable, they will be accepted; however, line workers' participation in goal-setting may be more effective where the work culture is more professional and egalitarian.

Participatory goal-setting in JOBS may produce more commitment and a more challenging level of goals.[12] However, I did not hear about participatory goal-setting in any of the sites visited, and in Riverside County, top management's imposition of explicit line worker placement goals in late 1989 was widely resented. To be fair to workers, initial goals normally are set at a low or moderate level. If experience proves that more challenging goals are possible, the goals are often increased; workers may then resent the "speed-up," as occurred in Riverside.

Setting goals for an entire office or a work group can have motivating effects that are independent of goals set for an individual—through peer support of individual effort, peer modeling of goal commitment (and possibly on the dissemination of effective practice), and by attaching great importance to group goals and group success. However, it is an open question as to how much quantitative performance measures should be used to structure interworker competition for recognition and praise. On one hand, rewarding outstanding achievement is motivating. The Riverside regional office that most emphasized competition among line workers (evidenced by the proliferation of plaques and ribbons and specially inscribed cups on the doors and filing cabinets) was also the most productive of the three regional offices in terms of job placements. On the other hand, it is possible that competition among workers can lower group morale and erode collective productivity,[13] although I saw no evidence that this occurred in this particular office.

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[11]See H. P. Sims, Jr. and P. Lorenzi, *The New Leadership Paradigm: Social Learning and Cognition in Organizations* (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1992), for an excellent overview. See also L. W. Frederiksen and R. P. Johnson, "Organizational Behavior Management," *Progress in Behavior Modification* 12 (1981): 67-118; E. A. Locke, G. P. Latham, and M. Erez, "The Determinants of Goal Commitment," *Academy of Management Review* 13, no. 1 (1988): 23-39; and Champagne and McAfee, 1989.

[12]Locke, Latham, and Erez, 1988, pp. 31-32.

[13]P. M. Blau, *The Dynamics of Bureaucracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955).

The research literature is somewhat ambiguous concerning the question of whether rewards or punishments ought to be attached to successful or unsuccessful goal achievement. If rewards or punishments are attached, the goals may be taken more seriously, but external incentives might actually decrease motivation that arises from internally generated commitment.[14] Some line workers interviewed expressed dislike for "producing stats" and said that doing so was "demoralizing."[15] Also, attaching rewards and punishments to goals represents another opportunity for managers to guess wrong about what truly motivates workers and what might be regarded as fair. Mistakes of this kind can offset benefits that could have been obtained from setting the goals right.

The issue of fairness was particularly salient in the central regional office in Riverside. It was said by management that no worker was ever penalized unfairly for measured performance falling below the standard through no fault of his or her own; however, to prevent such a penalty, the worker's supervisor had to believe in and document an acceptable reason—a solution that works only when there is trust between worker and supervisor, which was not always the case. (Similarly, the judgment of supervisors must be relied on to supplement even acceptable numbers, if these numbers do not fully reflect the high quality of work a staff member is producing.)

High-stakes measurements, whether connected solely to goals or to goals and rewards and punishments, can lead individuals to fiddle with the numbers. A supervisor in Riverside related one scenario, describing hypothetical events at the end of a worker's performance review period:

> The client calls in after a job interview and the counselor says, "Did you get a job?" "No." "Did you get a job offer?" [A job offer the client subsequently declines for an acceptable reason is provisionally credited to the caseworker as a placement if it occurs at the end of a review period, although this credit is reversed in the next review period.] "No." "Are you sure you didn't get a job offer?" See?

This can demoralize staff if they know about the practice or suspect it. More troubling still, if clients begin to suspect staff are playing a numbers game, according to this same Riverside supervisor, "They will come to think the whole program is a joke, that the only thing you care about is employment and not the client's interests. And then word spreads throughout the program, and the clients become harder to work with."

However, the supervisor thought these problems could be prevented by

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[14]Deci, 1975.

[15]Undoubtedly, a diversion of energy from doing their "real" jobs to "producing stats" would be demoralizing and would harm actual productivity; however, this situation should be distinguished from a reduction in intrinsic motivation to help clients.

maintaining scrupulous ethical standards and asserted that in Riverside these standards were in fact observed.[16]

"Creaming" as an Unintended Consequence

Performance measures must be designed so that staff are not simply meeting the measures; rather, they should be producing genuinely valued results. In employment and training programs, "creaming" the more job-ready clients at the expense of the less job-ready is always a risk if workers are rewarded solely for job placements. When job placements are paramount, caseworkers tend to pay more attention to clients who need relatively less assistance. By using this strategy the quick successes that are possible can make a caseworker's job placement accomplishments and program "stats" look impressive. But creaming can also undermine a program's attempt to make a net difference by helping clients achieve something they would not have been able to achieve on their own.

To some extent the tendency to concentrate on clients most likely to succeed may be countered by close supervision of caseworkers and the imposition of job placement goals so challenging that caseworkers must reach into the pool of less job-ready participants in order to meet them. Riverside managers used both approaches and believed that they had largely prevented creaming problems, but JOBS managers who hope to improve the productivity of their programs by introducing performance goals and measures should not ignore the potential for this unintended consequence.[17]

Measurement Meets the Culture of "Helping"

Because the imposition of performance measures implies a possible challenge to either the practitioner's effort or competency, this process often produces tensions. Professionals in all fields probably find work performance measurement disagreeable, and practitioners in the "helping" professions—whose efforts in part spring from a conception of self rooted in altruism—may find it extremely so.

In JOBS programs there is yet another reason for the helping professionals to dislike performance measurement. It seems to dehumanize clients. "You look at the clients as though they are a raw materials inventory" waiting to be processed, said one interviewee. One JOBS manager said he hoped that his program would never adopt an approach to measurement like Riverside's because "each client is unique and has special needs."

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[16]Middle- and upper-level GAIN management in Riverside emphasized their insistence on ethical behavior. Riverside managers are especially sensitive about their published data because placement rates are so high skeptics might question their reliability. Partly to counter any such possibility, Riverside GAIN managers undertook an internal audit of their placement data in 1991 that confirmed their accuracy.

[17]Program managers also believed that demanding participation requirements of the sort mandated by the state and the federal government (and subscribed to locally in Riverside as well) worked against creaming (Riccio and Friedlander, 1992, p. 61). My own interviews with Riverside caseworkers confirmed this view, although I was also told that sometimes the workers would "pay less attention" to less likely prospects.

If goal-setting and measurement actually do help improve performance—and the Riverside experience in conjunction with a body of research suggest they do—then JOBS managers need to find ways to reconcile caseworkers schooled in the philosophy of individualized service to the practice of "managing by the numbers."

Recognize "Accountability Drag"—and Hold It Down

The regulatory component of the JOBS program is a natural attractor for the culture of "accountability" and the apparatus of "compliance." Federal and state top managers, welfare rights advocates, electioneering politicians from rival ideological and partisan camps, and governmental auditors all have stakes in seeing that these programs move in directions they approve; to the extent that their demands for accountability impose penalties on program performance, we may speak of *accountability drag*.[18]

More than in any other way, accountability drag shows up in a JOBS program as an escalation of paperwork. Statistics must be collected, entered, transmitted, received, stored, and—occasionally—reviewed. Narrative files must be created, maintained, updated, and audited. Whenever a deviation from the standard routine is contemplated, a justification must be recorded: Ever more detailed prescriptions lead to more detailed records to document the fact that they have been complied with.

Most line workers, when asked about documentation requirements, complained bitterly about the drudgery, the overload, the meaninglessness. Guessing how much time they spent on paperwork, the estimate given by JOBS workers was at or near 50 percent in almost every site visited. By what proportion might this be reduced without a loss of quality or accountability? The guesses ranged between 25 and 75 percent.

Such reports should be taken as suggestive rather than statistically precise. Undoubtedly my sample of caseworkers was biased toward those who found paperwork unusually frustrating. They may have unwittingly overstated the quantitative burden and underestimated the value of something they disliked greatly. Yet, independent of such empirical estimates, there are reasons to believe that too much time and energy goes into paperwork.

First, from the viewpoint of those who demand documentation, the labor of those complying with such a demand is free. Like all free goods, the labor involved in documentation tends to be exploited without due regard for its true costs.

Second, it is easy to argue convincingly that new and improved documentation might produce surprising and important results, even though these might be hard to specify in advance: Could more data be bad? Of course not. Data might become genuine information, and information might become evidence, and evidence might become the occasion for a decision, and a good decision might lead to improved

[18]By "penalties" I mean costs not justified by improvements in program direction or efficiency. Unfortunately, there is irreducible ambiguity about what costs are "justified," given that people legitimately disagree about the importance of various improvements, or even what constitutes an improvement.

action, and improved action might lead to improved policy or managerial results.

Also, it is easy to blame third parties for excessive data requests: I am telling you that you must supply these additional data not because I care about them but because the state (the feds, the auditors, the Congress, the welfare rights advocates, the Office of Management and Budget, the Department of Finance, the Legislature) demands them. And no, I have no idea why; but it is not my job to figure that out.

Third, even potential users of documentation underestimate how much time it will take them to make sense of it and therefore how likely they are to ignore what eventually does get produced and transmitted.

Fourth, someone may challenge a decision or an action; data must then be on hand, and quickly, to mount a defense. As one regional manager put it:

> The fear of not having something available dictates the policy of documenting everything and twelve forms for everything . . . and some forms are duplicates of other forms. . . . That is one thing that really demotivates staff. . . . I say bird-dog the process and . . . get the input of the staff who are going to implement the process. . . . In [headquarters office] there are people who think they know what staff need, but they are wrong.

Fifth, even when documentation is in fact valuable, little attention is given to ensuring that its production and transmission will be carried out efficiently. The science and art of doing this—Management Information Systems (MIS) design—is relatively young, and many designers of documentation systems do not have ready access to specialists who are able to make these tasks efficient.

Sometimes MIS specialists are the cause of the problem rather than part of its solution, in that they are professionally biased toward large-scale, high-tech approaches. One observer describes the failure of a $1 million, professionally designed MIS to match the performance of a secretary who called the agency field offices once a week and entered less than 100 pieces of data into her word processor.[19] The secretary was able to produce a brief report tracking the organization's progress with a system costing under $10,000 to design and that was installed in less than a month. The million-dollar MIS system was initially ignored and ultimately discarded.

Most likely, much benefit could be had from simply asking people in documentation production for suggestions about how the job might be done efficiently. But the habits of hierarchy and associated status concerns inhibit this sort of communication.

"Unnecessary" Paperwork

Is paperwork reduction achievable? Can we distinguish between necessary and unnecessary paperwork? Justifiable demands for accountability—and the fears of administrators that they may have to meet even *unjustifiable* demands for accountability—lead to an irreducible minimum of paperwork; but overestimating the benefits and underestimating the costs of documentation lead to "unnecessary"

[19]S. Cohen, *The Effective Public Manager: Achieving Success in Government* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1988).

paperwork. It is unnecessary in the sense that, more than most matters in government, success in keeping paperwork down is largely a matter of putting your mind to it.

Paperwork may be necessary as a means for giving instructions to lower-level staff and encouraging their compliance. The Employability Development Plans that JOBS programs are required to create for each client may in part serve such a purpose. Describing what elements go into this plan and requiring that they be recorded in a specific format is one technique higher-level managers (not to mention policymakers) can use to encourage a systematic and consistent approach by line staff to recommending services for JOBS clients.

Of course, whether any particular bit of auxiliary paperwork counts as necessary or unnecessary depends on whether line staff are doing more or less what higher-ups intend for them to do in the absence of such prodding. It also depends on whether a less costly means than the requirement to fill out certain forms is available, which are judgments that must be made case by case. Once again, keeping down the paperwork depends on thinking hard and often about ways to do it.

In Oregon I discovered a success story about the reduction of paperwork involved in the AFDC intake process. On her own initiative, one regional manager, Billie Bagger, undertook a pilot project that has cut the number of pages at intake from 22 to four; she also succeeded in streamlining the process so that intake workers could consult with one another, rather than spend time researching rules and regulations in the voluminous agency manuals or troubling their supervisors.

As she explained it, the new intake process focuses on establishing four dimensions of eligibility—"the things that really matter"—income, assets, citizenship, and residency. Ninety percent of the cases are simple and standard, but the intake process treats 100 percent of the applicants as though they might fall into one of the exceptional categories, which wastes the clients' time (who are sometimes obliged to come back one or two times before the intake process is completed) as well as staffs'.

But what of the possibility that clients might, in exceptional cases, be denied benefits to which they are entitled? In Bagger's district the local Legal Aid director sits on the Welfare Advisory Board. When he raised the obvious concerns, she replied:

> Well, you help us make a choice: Do you really feel you're doing anybody any favors by filling out twenty-two pages? Let's let the clients tell what they want. We can do focus groups and talk to the clients. We hear so much satisfaction from clients who aren't being treated as a number but as individuals.

According to Bagger, the Legal Aid director "so far has had no problem with it; he thinks that we're being very fair." To backstop the process, a client grievance procedure, in effect in Oregon for four years, is a ready vehicle for complaints. (The forms are easily available in every welfare department waiting room.)

The suppression of unnecessary paperwork is a matter of organizational structure as well as managerial understanding and commitment. The administrative units in charge of forms design (or information systems) must be charged with supporting

the overall program mission, and rewarded for holding down accountability drag (or penalized for increasing it). Billie Bagger launched her campaign against accountability drag from her position as an AFS regional manager, and sold the new intake process initially as a "pilot project" within the larger AFS organization. Its eventual adoption depends on the AFS director, who at the time of this writing has decided that it ought to become department-wide policy. In the long run, whether the intake procedures will remain at four pages or grow again back to 22 will depend on whether the relevant headquarters staff units will "buy in" to a broader conception of their mission.

Leadership Is Hard, but Simple

The design and implementation of a high-expectations JOBS program can be accomplished by ordinary people working under relatively ordinary circumstances—provided they decide to do it and work hard at it. Leaders of such a program are not exempted from hard work, of course. Indeed, their role is especially hard; fortunately, it is not too complicated. What is required is to: (1) define a challenging mission, set some related goals, and persuade staff that the mission and goals are worthwhile; and (2) persuade others, both within the organization and outside it, that success is possible.

The first point has been discussed (see the section on line staff responsibility); I now turn to the second.[20]

It is not surprising that public agency managers and lower-level staff do not always believe that success in government human service programs is possible. Frequently they are right. As helpers of last resort, government agencies serve those whom families, voluntary organizations, and the labor market have already proven unable or unwilling to help. In addition, budgets for productive services are inadequate—often grossly inadequate—but at the same time much money is wasted on unproductive activities that serve special bureaucratic or professional interests or clientele groups.

Compounding these problems, incentives toward high performance are weak while the constraints on removing incompetents and sluggards are strong, and "accountability drag" is pervasive; it takes many forms, and is continuously and powerfully reinforced by the wider political culture.

The degree of difficulty varies by type of program, current fiscal environment, and the current balance of political forces. However, even when circumstances are moderately hopeful—as they probably are in many JOBS sites[21]—powerful inertia works against success. It takes the form of a belief that things are bound to continue

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[20]For a similar view of what leadership entails, see Behn, 1991, pp. 203-4.

[21]J. L. Hagen and I. Lurie, *Implementing JOBS: Initial State Choices* (Albany: Professional Development Program, Nelson A. Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy, University at Albany, State University of New York, 1992). However, the authors emphasize that funding levels, nationwide, are quite low. In the federal fiscal year 1991 few states were supplying enough state matching funds to draw down their full entitlements of federal funds. Nationally, just under half the federal funds were being claimed.

in the same slow-paced way they always have or, to draw out the parallel to the case of JOBS clients themselves, it takes the form of *low expectations*.

Who is to lead the charge against these low expectations? Who is to trumpet the simple—and most importantly—true idea that with the right sort of coordinated efforts, and with a moderate amount of determination, this can be done! Naturally, those individuals whom others will be relying on to coordinate those efforts and to inspire that determination in the many quarters where it will be needed. And for the most part that means the topmost managers, the welfare agency director, and the JOBS program manager. This pattern was clearly evident in a number of sites, most notably in Riverside and in Oregon's Service District 4 (Salem).

However, the high visibility of those leaders who also happen to be at the top of the managerial hierarchy can be misinterpreted. Leadership is not necessarily a personal trait, nor is it the exclusive property of officially defined organizational positions; at its core, leadership relies on an assortment of tasks that help groups or organizations achieve a collective goal. While it is often useful to have strong personalities and people in top hierarchical roles take on these tasks, it is not absolutely necessary—certainly not by a single individual. Given the natural suspicion of people who claim the leader role for themselves in our democratic, egalitarian political culture, it may be desirable to have leadership activities distributed widely, and for those undertaking them to deny that they are really leadership activities at all. Within this interpretation of leadership, a great many of the individuals in the sites I visited were acting as leaders.

Leadership and Risk-Taking

If the tasks of executive leadership in a JOBS program are simple and the capacities to undertake them are widespread, a critical element yet may prove to be in short supply: a willingness to take political and professional risks. After all, the most realistic vision of the future can end up being wrong, and if not wrong—perhaps in a changed political climate—unpopular.

Such risks are lowest for senior executives who have a track record of success, as did Lawrence Townsend in Riverside County, and can, in some sense, afford to fail. It is an open question whether there are enough such risk-takers in the higher reaches of American welfare administration to supply the kind of leadership that running a high-expectations JOBS programs requires. But if not, how can the ranks of risk-takers be expanded?

A perhaps unintended benefit of the Oregon strategy of interagency partnerships was that as it increased the resource and skills base for JOBS services delivery it also spread the responsibilities for program success or failure. In Service District 4, for example, Chemeketa Community College is the prime contractor to coordinate and deliver JOBS services. But the welfare agency (AFS) sees itself as having a great stake in Chemeketa's success. As AFS District Manager Billie Bagger put it, "We [AFS] want to participate. This is our program. We all own it. If it's successful, we are all successful. And if it's not, we are all failures."

Within an agency, some of the risks of leadership to senior executives can be shared with middle-level managers, whose expertise in operational coordination often grants them a vision of possibilities denied even to the senior executives. If

these middle managers are moved into the right functional roles they might find themselves defining organizational mission and goals and making efforts to persuade others of their achievability. Such accidental leaders—the middle manager members of the Operations Committee of the Medford Service District—are introduced in Chapter 3.

Shared Responsibility and Diminished Efficacy

Unfortunately, with the dispersion of responsibility also comes the dispersion of power and, quite possibly, a diminished sense of efficacy. That puts a heavier burden on program leaders to convince managers that their efforts can make a difference. Billie Bagger distinguishes for her managers between control and influence:

> Even though I don't have direct control, I have direct influence . . . I've always told my managers, "If you don't have control over something, you still have a lot of influence. If you don't do everything to use that influence then you're not doing your job." I don't write the contracts but I am responsible for my influence. And that's as much as most people have in a partnership anyway.

Chapter 3

Making Use of Other Agencies

Even though the JOBS legislation formalized the control of employment programs for recipients of AFDC by state welfare agencies, it encouraged participation by other service providers as well as the use of funds besides those appropriated specifically for JOBS. For example, it refers to "services . . . expected to be made available by other agencies on a nonreimbursable basis." The rationale for such a prescription is two-fold: Reliance on other agencies can reduce the costs of duplication and, by making use of expertise located in other agencies and their professional staff, enhance program performance.

But as most program managers who have tried to establish collaborative relationships will testify, there are many barriers to doing so, ranging from the misalignments of agencies' respective budgetary or personnel systems to employees' fears about possible threats to their jobs. The barriers may be especially high when the objective is to implement a high-expectations version of a JOBS program because this involves (1) communicating a specific program philosophy to JOBS clients and line workers, and (2) arranging organizational structure and process to make it possible for the line workers to act in accordance with program philosophy. It is a moderate challenge to accomplish these things within a welfare agency organization, but daunting in the interorganizational context.

Many JOBS managers worry that the principal partner agencies—community colleges and adult schools, JTPA training contractors, and state Employment Services departments—typically do not like to serve welfare clients and are not geared up to serve them well. This is true despite the formal mandates of these institutions to serve disadvantaged or poor populations, which contain a fair proportion of individuals on welfare. In Tulare County, California, only 13 individuals served by the largest JOBS office in the first three months of 1992 received any service from the local office of the Employment Development Department (EDD), the agency charged with providing services to unemployed workers. (The total JOBS caseload was 175 clients a few months earlier.)[1] As for JTPA, a JOBS administrator said of his attempt to work with the local private industry council, which is responsible for administering JTPA programs, "They creamed our clients at the 95 percent level and, for what they did do, they submitted astronomical bids."[2]

But even when agency goals are approximately in accord, collaborating across organizational boundaries routinely presents challenges. The constellation of such challenges is suggested by the lament of one job club leader in Tulare County about an adult school teacher whom she thought generally ineffective and particularly inept with JOBS clients: The job club leader did not feel free to directly approach the teacher or to discuss the problem with the teacher's supervisor; such matters, she

[1]Internal document, DPSS casefiles.

[2]This manager meant that only 5 percent of the JOBS clients referred to the JTPA agency for service were accepted.

said, would have to be handled by her own supervisor. The problem thus is raised to the level of interorganizational diplomacy, and at that level she did not believe it would receive the urgent attention it deserved, nor for that matter would they have the down-in-the-trenches knowledge to be able to solve it constructively.

The following discussion presents the problem of inducing effective and efficient performance from partner agencies linked through contracts and client-referral mechanisms. Several possible approaches are suggested—though no magic bullets. Here I take the point of view of the welfare agency. In the next section, the viewpoint shifts to how to reduce the difficulties faced by the collaborating JOBS agencies and their representatives in working their way toward agreement. The principal suggestion here is to let as much of the work as possible be done by middle-manager operations specialists rather than by agency leaders. The final section of this chapter identifies agency contracting and purchasing staff as critical to the collaborative process, and speculates on how they might be better mobilized to help top managers meet their program objectives.

Inducing Effective and Efficient Performance

Typically in JOBS, the welfare agency purchases or otherwise leverages a block of contractor capacity to provide service to JOBS clients over a specified period, thus raising the question, How might the welfare agency structure the relationship with the contractor to boost performance and/or hold down costs?

Giving Technical Assistance

In a contractual relationship, the welfare agency is buying (among other things) access to the contractor's know-how; but this may not be very advanced when it comes to serving JOBS clients, and it may be worthwhile for the welfare agency to invest in upgrading it, at no cost to the contractor.[3] However, when the welfare agency has the capacity to produce the know-how more cheaply and "gives" the results to the contractor,[4] there can be an additional benefit—improved alignment of agency goals, as illustrated by the Riverside County experience.

As part of its system of monitoring more than a dozen school districts providing adult basic education services to GAIN participants in Riverside County, the DPSS contracts management office analyzed statistics on the rapidity of client progress. This office concluded that better attendance was associated with faster progress—something many adult education professionals already believe—and made a point of trying to persuade schools to pay more attention to preventing absenteeism. (In 1989-90, between 67 and 93 percent of the several school sites' GAIN participants were *not* meeting the minimum attendance standards.) As a result, the schools added a routine attendance accounting to the monthly report sent to each student participant's GAIN counselor. The schools also undertook to report

[3]This bargain for the contractor is more apparent than real: If the contractor endeavors to acquire the know-how independently the costs of doing so are charged to the welfare agency anyway.

[4]This is sensible even if the contractor can then find a way to capitalize on the know-how.

to each counselor almost immediately on any participant who missed more than 10 percent of class time during any given week. In some cases, reporting was done daily. To facilitate daily reporting, the GAIN program subsidized several schools' purchase of fax equipment.[5]

Absorbing the Risks Entailed by Outlays on Long-lived Assets

Similarly, the Riverside GAIN program absorbed much of the costs in time and energy researching and choosing a computer-based teaching system to install in five of the contractors' sites (it chose Wasatch). In addition to transferring simple information about these computers, the DPSS used its own funds to purchase 150 system units for use by the schools on behalf of GAIN clients—and on behalf of other students as well—provided they did not interfere with GAIN clients' access to the machines.[6]

This example illustrates the wisdom of the welfare agency taking on itself risks that it can bear more easily than the contractor and for which the welfare agency would have to pay in any event. In the case of the Wasatch teaching system the schools might have purchased the equipment and then recovered the costs over some years via contracts to serve GAIN clients. However, this arrangement would have relied on the future steady flow of GAIN clients, an assumption the schools were not in as good a position to evaluate as the DPSS managers. Moreover, the vagaries of public budgeting left the DPSS with over $600,000 in unspent JTPA "8 percent funds" with which it could make the purchase, whereas equivalent venture capital for the schools simply was not available.[7]

Micromanagement

Managers of contractor agencies may have inadequate knowledge of underperforming personnel at the line-staff level in their organizations. Conversely, welfare agency line personnel, struggling in an unsatisfactory team relationship with line workers from contractor organizations, may have quite precise knowledge of such problems. If they coordinate their knowledge, welfare agency contract managers can, at contract renewal time or earlier, bring pressure to bear on

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[5]Attendance figures are from Riverside County DPSS casefiles.

[6]Riverside GAIN also invested in monitoring the effects of Wasatch-based instruction and found that clients progressed more than twice as rapidly at four out of five of the Wasatch sites as they did at the other schools. (Internal document, Riverside County DPSS.) On this basis the DPSS decided in 1992 to purchase computer-aided instruction systems for three additional schools.

[7]These are funds earmarked for JTPA coordination with state education systems, a portion of which are further earmarked for expenditure on behalf of welfare recipients. As a result of negotiations between the local JTPA director and the DPSS director, the local private industry council (which ordinarily would have controlled these funds) gave control over to the GAIN program. Riverside was said to be the only county in California to be able to control JTPA 8 percent funds directly.

The same principle is illustrated by the willingness of the Riverside DPSS to build space in its own offices to house a job club program run under contract to DPSS by the state EDD. As it happens, the contract was terminated by DPSS after three and a half years, at which point DPSS began to run its own job clubs in the vacated space.

contractors to do something about their problem workers.[8]

Naturally, the offending contractor resents micromanagerial interference; at least symbolically, it is an accusatory act. Hence, the welfare agency should attempt to create a shared culture that establishes a joint right to identify problems and seek solutions, even though the welfare agency may insist that, rights aside, the primary responsibility remains with the contractor. Creating such a culture is a long, hard process, as many JOBS administrators in Oregon will attest who have labored to make the interagency partnership concept come to life. A sign of their progress, I was told, was that "cooperation"—originally the collective goal—gradually came to be redefined as the more ambitious "collaboration."

Certainly nothing contributes as much to the making of a shared culture as agencies performing favors for one another—for example, the JTPA-sponsored life skills class in Medford, Oregon, taking more AFS clients than were contracted for simply because they showed up, or the Riverside DPSS advancing funds to the adult school English as a Second Language (ESL) contractors to help them through a cash-flow problem. Managers on the receiving end of such favors often would refer to them in interviews with clear expressions of gratitude.

Quantitative Measures of Performance

The same arguments made in Chapter 2 on behalf of goal-setting, measurement, and providing feedback to JOBS line staff and supervisors apply to contractor organizations. It is valuable to set goals, measure performance, and provide feedback, even if specific rewards or punishments do not effect results in the short run. Bill Braley, the "point man" for Chemeketa Community College (CCC), the prime contractor for the JOBS program in the Salem, Oregon, area, acknowledged that the numbers in the AFS-CCC contract were "really only goals" but that, "It's funny, people will try to do what you expect them to do, whether you're paying them or not."

Many of the same cautions pertain to quantitative assessment systems at the level of organizations that we saw pertain to individuals:

Speed-ups and ill-will. Chemeketa had been achieving 48 job placements per month, although its contract set a target of only 31. When renegotiating the contract, not only did AFS try to boost the target but it tried to do so in the course of a renegotiation occurring midway through the two-year contract period, which angered the Chemeketa managers and made the negotiations more difficult.

Unreliable measures, creaming, and unfair evaluations. Designers of the contract between the Riverside DPSS and the local EDD for job club services worked hard to get the targets into a mutually acceptable range. The DPSS sought to boost job placements but prevent creaming, while the EDD sought to hold down the risks of failure and the burden of trying to place clients not considered job-ready. The

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[8]Micromanagement may be done on behalf of cost reduction just as it may on behalf of performance enhancement. Because the opportunities for micromanagement may be scarce—as will certainly be the tolerance for it on the part of the contractors—the DPSS manager may have to choose whether to attend to costs or performance.

measures included: job club completion rate; percent working full time (30 hours a week or more); percent in unsubsidized employment; a 90-day retention rate; a minimum rate of removal from the AFDC rolls after 90 days in employment; and an average wage. Moreover, the EDD had to accept everyone DPSS referred.

Over the three and a half years of the contract the targets kept shifting—in both directions. For example, the average-wage target went up but the job-placement target went down. Nevertheless, after three years of trying, the numbers still failed to capture the relevant performance issues. The DPSS contract monitoring report of October 1990 contains a contractor's lament—phrased in terms of the employability characteristics of the typical person referred by DPSS to the EDD job club:

- Out of work for 3-4 years
- Low skill level—no high school diploma or GED
- In need of supportive services
- In need of job search skills

Though the contractor in this situation continuously attempted to negotiate with employers for lower minimum job qualifications and higher entry-level wages, to maintain their agency's credibility with employers the contractor's staff also felt a responsibility to refer applicants who met the employers' minimum requirements. Furthermore, they felt a responsibility to clients to refer them only to employers who were going to accept their applications, in order to avoid undermining clients' cooperation, motivation, and self-esteem.

Fiddling with the numbers. It was believed in one welfare agency that to boost its "successful placement" rate, a job club contractor would discourage hard-to-place clients from returning for the last few days of the three-week activity: their failure to appear would protect the contractor's performance by shrinking the denominator of the rate, defined as "clients completing . . ." When the welfare agency caught on, it introduced a separate job club completion goal for the contractor (of 75 percent).

Payment for Performance

The Riverside DPSS and local EDD terminated their contracting relationship in June 1991, to the apparent relief of both parties. One DPSS observer drew the lesson that the organizational culture of EDD could not adapt to the special needs of serving welfare clients. Another interpretation drew attention to the contrast between the enthusiasm of the new GAIN organization and the traditionalism of a relatively old EDD.

A third, plausible explanation of the failed DPSS-EDD experiment is that the contract was not structured with enough real incentives. EDD was being reimbursed for cost, not for performance. What might have happened with performance-based payment schedules?

Consider a contract structured around reimbursement at a fixed rate for defined units of performance such as the Riverside County DPSS agreement with adult

schools, which tied payment to client progress in remedial education.[9] This contract specified a schedule of improvements in test scores as measured by the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) instrument—for example, $100 for a one-grade advance from ninth- to tenth-grade level in math. Riverside also paid $225 for a GED or a high school diploma. (They abandoned performance contracting for English as a Second Language when both Riverside County DPSS and the adult school providers failed to come up with a system that fairly characterized the client's baseline level of performance.)

Jim Leach, the GAIN (and, more recently, the DPSS) contracts manager in Riverside, thinks that performance contracting is immensely powerful compared to simple cost-reimbursement, which might more accurately be called "contracting for capacity." Evidence in favor of this view turned up on the desk of a teacher staffing the computer lab at one adult school I visited: Taped to the desk was a schedule of payments for TABE grade-level improvements for each of eight intervals for three different subjects. The teacher used them not only for his own guidance but also to motivate students: "'Congratulations, Sharon, look what you've done—you just earned us $125!' And you know, she was so proud. That may have been the first thing in her adult life she accomplished for anybody besides her children."

Although the schools in Jim Leach's area at first resisted the concept, most have come to like the arrangement, probably because initially he "enticed them" into the system (as he put it) with fairly generous reimbursement rates.

Choosing Targets and Measures

In many ways, the performance-reimbursement contract is similar to a cost-reimbursement contract, for which great pains have been taken to design numerical goals and quantitative assessment procedures. The difference in reward structure is crucial, however. It magnifies the contractor's incentives to produce the results desired by the welfare agency—provided, of course, that the rewards are designed and administered correctly. If they are not, then all the problems associated with goal-setting and performance measurements will also be magnified.[10] If the DPSS-EDD contract had been genuinely performance-based, the EDD effort probably would have been more productive. In addition, with the stakes increased, it is possible that both parties would have figured out better than they did how to design workable measurement procedures and numerical targets.

Choosing Reimbursement Rates

Another serious difficulty in designing performance contract terms concerns the choice of reimbursement rates. In negotiating for cost-reimbursement, the contractor

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[9]Riverside GAIN paid the schools out of the JTPA 8 percent funds (see p. 43). The schools were obliged to agree not to rely on state Department of Education capitation funding (payments per person enrolled and/or attending) for providing these services but to allow themselves to depend entirely on the GAIN performance-based payments.

[10]See E. M. Gramlich and P. P. Koshel, *Educational Performance Contracting: An Evaluation of an Experiment* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1975); and J. D. Donahue, *The Privatization Decision: Public Ends and Private Means* (New York: Basic Books, 1989).

must reveal certain facts to the welfare agency about its cost structure. Although there is an incentive to inflate cost estimates, welfare agency negotiators have at least a starting point from which to search for information they then can use to deflate these estimates. In the end, negotiators concerned about holding down costs, and interested in persuading auditors that they have acted responsibly and effectively to hold down costs, can feel that they have done their jobs.

Unfortunately, unless the rate-setting occurs in a competitive-bidding context, it is hard for the parties to know what rates are fair and workable. This is because, first, contractors are paid not only to produce goods or services but also to manage risk—the risk of losing money if they do not produce efficiently—which is inherently hard to estimate. Second, reimbursement rates must compensate for the contractors' assumption of risk by allowing them to retain profits if they do produce efficiently—and by their nature, future profits from such sources cannot be known.

Political Problems

Technical problems in rate-setting in turn lead to political problems. If contractors profit, it then appears as though the contract negotiators and the auditors looking over their shoulders were loose with the public's money. Yet across any sample of performance-based contracts, if risks are allocated evenly, as many as half the contractors would be making profits. Moreover, on the basis of probabilities, a few contractors would make *very large* profits. Distaste for the idea of contractor profits led the U.S. Department of Labor to challenge the performance-based contracts that had formed the basis for two years' worth of interagency transactions in a JOBS service district in Oregon. As a result, the state had to reimburse the federal government several million dollars.

There are political problems on the losses side, too, especially when a public entity is operating under performance-based contracts. Suppose the EDD had lost money running the job club in Riverside County; how could the agency, running on a budget approved months earlier that was supposed to only cover costs, "afford" to "lose money"? EDD and similar public employment departments are not, after all, like private firms that can make good on losses by borrowing or selling off assets. Solutions to this problem are not simple and must be fashioned in light of the contractor agency's legal and political capacity to (1) absorb losses in the current year out of its own funds; (2) carry them over to a future budget year; or (3) obtain what in effect is a deficiency appropriation.

Fee-for-Service, Referrals, and Quasi-Competition

Another method of reimbursing providers is to pay on a fee-for-service basis. For instance, when a JOBS program refers clients to a local adult school for remedial education, some school districts are reimbursed by the state Department of Education for those clients' average daily attendance (ADA). The ADA

reimbursement is in effect a "fee-for-service." The welfare agency itself, rather than a third party, could also be the source of funds.[11]

The attraction of this system is that provider revenues are a direct function of client inflow that can, to a fair degree, be affected by welfare agency referrals. If the welfare agency thinks the provider performs well, it can increase referrals in that direction; if not, it can decrease or stop referrals altogether. One caseworker describes how she dealt with a nearby job club run by another institution:

> I could not get progress reports or transportation logs, and I would even go and sit there and they still didn't get this to me regularly. And none of my clients got jobs. I don't deal with that job club any more. They can't pay me to deal with that job club.

And conversely, if they perform, they get her business: "My job club teachers get results! They are dedicated. Plus, it makes them look good in their jobs. And they appreciate my sending them clients, and I appreciate them getting my clients jobs."

As this example suggests, manipulating incentives through the use of the referral stream usually depends on the availability of competitive providers.[12] In principle, potential competition among service providers is everywhere; in practice, it is close to nonexistent. The following is a fair sample of actual or potential competitive situations observed in the sites I studied:

- The Alameda County welfare agency can refer clients to several alternative school districts providing adult basic education services.
- In the Medford, Oregon, district, the AFS bypassed the prime JOBS contractor to contract for services to teen mothers with a nonprofit organization whose business office was not even based in the service district.[13]
- When the Riverside DPSS became disenchanted with EDD as a provider of job club services, it took the function over itself.
- In Indio, California (in Riverside County), a JTPA agency could utilize either or both of two community-based organizations serving essentially the same ethnic population in a certain area.
- In Medford, several years ago the local JTPA agency considered providing adult basic education on its own or through a contract provider other than Rogue Community College.

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[11]In general, however, the funding of education services under JOBS presents complex and sometimes contentious issues, which "affect the capacity and willingness of educational institutions to deliver services to welfare recipients." See E. Pauly, D. Long, and K. Martinson, *Linking Welfare and Education: A Study of New Programs in Five States* (New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, 1992), p. 33.

[12]The exceptional case occurs when a provider's service is so poor that no service at all appears better.

[13]This contract was structured on cost-reimbursement rather than fee-for-service. However, the virtues of competition would extend to this payment structure as well as to performance-based payment.

This list may briefly suggest the political problems of trying to stimulate performance through competition. Under the best circumstances, in any area there are likely to be only one or two service providers to potentially compete with the current providers. They are all likely to be either nonprofit or public-sector organizations that view themselves as doing their best to offer services and that participate in a web of community relationships that go beyond the particular services at issue. A decision to shift business from one such provider to another is a virtual declaration of war unless (as in the case of the EDD-DPSS relationship) the losing party has its own reasons for wanting out.

Securing the benefits of competition is easier when contracts are being let for the first time and financial dependencies and expectations have not yet come into being. The Medford district AFS decision to bypass Rogue Community College was made just as the JOBS program was being assembled. Even so, RCC appealed for help to political allies in Salem, and the conflict escalated to the point that the nonprofit organization preferred by AFS needed help from one of the most powerful members of the Oregon State Senate.

In addition to the political problems involved, switching clients among service providers can injure clients' interests and rights. For example, even if moving the ADA capitation payments of client Martina from mediocre Madison High to superior Stuyvesant High indirectly serves the interests of every client from Abigail to Zelda by sending a forceful signal to the provider, Martina should not be forced to travel an extra half hour a day to Stuyvesant unless the welfare agency decides that her educational progress is unsatisfactory at Madison and would be improved at Stuyvesant.[14]

Working Toward Agreement

In many localities, interagency cooperation in JOBS service delivery can potentially produce better program results than would occur without cooperation. How can potential partners organize negotiations to expedite their reaching agreement? One possible answer is by turning over principal negotiating responsibility to middle-manager specialists in operations, at the same time withdrawing it from the hands of agency executives.

Behind this conclusion lies the fact that much of what must be negotiated is for the most part technical. These technical issues involve not only the most effective and efficient ways to deliver services but also an extremely important function in today's public sector environment: aligning the administrative and funding systems that make cooperative service delivery feasible at all.

[14]The same deference to clients' rights, which implies not shifting them among public schools, also applies to the proprietary school sector. There is a nationwide phenomenon of proprietary vocational training schools filling welfare office parking lots and cable TV channels with salesmen competing for the patronage of welfare clients (among others); unfortunately, some of these schools have a deserved reputation as scam operations.

The Medford "Operations Committee"

The problem confronting an interagency "Operations Committee" of JOBS middle managers in Medford, Oregon, provides a useful case example. The committee met in June 1992 to complete revisions of their annual district service plan for submission to the state AFS. As an emergency measure, AFS had been directed by the governor and the legislature to cut $5 million for JOBS that had been programmed for the second the year of the 1991-93 fiscal biennium. The Medford district would have to make its proportionate contribution. The Operations group was trying to decide, among other things, whether to cut $20,000 for a currently offered Life Skills II class taught exclusively for JOBS clients at Rogue Community College.

If the JOBS money were withdrawn, would RCC be able and willing to offer the class anyway? That would depend. If the participants could qualify for federal Pell grants (for low-income students), these funds could be used. To qualify, students had to be eligible for community college admission; but because most of the participants were enrolled in adult basic education classes, they were not eligible. Some JOBS community work experience participants, however, would be eligible for admission but not eligible for Pell grants. If the class were offered by RCC as a "community education" class—that is, for students attending "prior to admission"—then JOBS could pay for the work experience enrollees. But these payments would not cover the entire estimated cost of the class. Other students would need to be enrolled who would pay the required $168 tuition. Ordinarily, one might think of Pell funding for them, but in this case—because it would be a nondegree class—Pell would not pay.

Would vocational education money be available? What was the break-even number of students required to launch the plan under each different assumption about financing sources? Was a life skills class consisting solely of JOBS clients better or worse than one with a more diverse composition?

This discussion consumed one half hour of a two-hour meeting dealing with impending budget reductions, attended by ten middle managers from four institutions: RCC, AFS, The Jobs Council (the name for the local private industry council), and the Medford office of the state Employment Division (ED).[15] Their discussion of Life Skills II ended with no resolution but with a promise by the RCC representative to go back and check "what the cost would actually be" to run Life Skills II as a community education class.

Turf, Budget, and Blame Issues

Although agency leaders through experience may have come to understand the administrative and funding systems of their own agencies, ordinarily they haven't the time or motivation to invest in understanding the systems and constraints of other agencies. This means that technical specialists need to be involved. Unfortunately, not all of what must be negotiated is technical. Institutional issues

[15]Three of these four agencies later became linked in a complex contractual relationship, a consortium called the Southern Oregon Regional Employment Compact (SOREC).

of various kinds are recurrent and pervasive. Operations specialists in Medford were also dealing with questions, some spoken and others not, such as the following: Given that one of RCC's Life Skills II instructors was reported by many JOBS clients to be negative and ineffective, did the Operations Committee want to use the current budget crisis as an opportunity to press for quality improvements, or perhaps move the class out from under the jurisdiction of the college entirely? The Jobs Council already ran what was thought to be a rather good Life Skills I class; might it not make sense then for them to run Life Skills II? And what about the price RCC was charging? RCC instructors were covered by a labor contract that in some people's eyes gave them high salaries in exchange for not very much work.

The answers to these questions would be of great interest to the executives of those institutions whose performance, budgets, and turf were under discussion. These executives would not necessarily be expected to give middle managers authority to supply the answers, but in the Medford context of June 1992 they were much more amenable than they had been only 18 months earlier. For three years prior to that time the leaders of these institutions had worked at trying to launch a prototype version of the JOBS program but had produced little except frustration and bad feeling. It was their failure that created the planning capacity embodied in the middle managers' Operations Committee and gave that committee relative latitude to tread in sensitive precincts. These developments were a boon to the JOBS program in the Medford Service District and to its clients.

The Medford Meltdown and Salvage Operation

In 1987, the Medford district was one of seven districts in the state to have been chosen to implement a pilot program known as New Jobs, which was similar in important respects to what later became the federal JOBS program. The service delivery and administrative concepts, like those of JOBS, turned on local partnership. Hence, representatives of AFS, Rogue Community College, The Jobs Council, and the state Employment Division began to negotiate. These four individuals (each of whom was the highest-level official of his or her respective institution in the local area) formed the core of what eventually became known as the Planning Committee, around which was assembled, with varying degrees of regularity, representatives from other public and community-based organizations with stakes in the program.

The Planning Committee began an early slide into anarchy. Turf, budget, and blame issues supplied the ammunition to all sides. In addition, substantive issues were aggravated by, and to a certain degree displaced by, personal issues. Negotiations—both within committee meetings and outside them—became a medium for expressing animosities and jealousies, overlaid with suspicions arising from endemic practices of concealment and deception. Refusal to engage with the technical problems of program design and operation destroyed any prospect of dealing effectually with the service issues at hand. Nor was any help to be had from the mixing of the four "strong personalities" who represented the four core agencies.

When service issues did come up, they were discussed for the most part at the symbolic level—to assign blame for past failures. The representative from the state

Employment Division frequently referred to welfare clients as "losers" and "second-class citizens;" AFS representatives believed that any failure to serve clients effectively had less to do with clients than with the inferior quality of services delivered by the other three agencies at the table.

Outside the meetings of the Planning Committee, AFS did what it could in many minor ways to set The Jobs Council and RCC at odds with one another. To counter this strategy, the latter two organizations, together with the Employment Division, created SOREC, the main purpose of which was to establish a venue in which the non-AFS partners could organize a common front.

The program put in place as a result of the Planning Committee's negotiating did not run well. According to one of the managers involved in the negotiation in mid-1989:

- AFS caseworkers could not schedule clients for life skills classes at RCC because RCC could not or would not inform them when the classes began, when they ended, or where they were being held.
- Clients were referred to JTPA providers on the assumption that they would receive thorough vocational assessment; but, at least in the eyes of some staff, the assessments were rudimentary and unsatisfactory.
- Clients were nominally enrolled in basic education classes at RCC, but there was "no idea about how many people were actually participating. They knew that literally hundreds of them were not participating. But they really didn't have any system to track it."
- Poor information systems ensured that managers were getting no feedback about what actually was happening at ground level. The director of The Jobs Council was able to convince himself that despite the persistent lack of progress, a "tidal wave" of people was shortly going to pass through adult basic education and job search and "crash on the shore of placements."

Representatives of AFS and its umbrella agency from headquarters in Salem were dispatched to stop the meltdown, but to no avail. The situation appeared so hopeless, and so immune to local self-help, that a two-person team of professional mediators was brought in from Eugene in December 1990 to work with the Planning Committee. The first mediation session produced an unexpected result: The AFS branch manager in Medford, expressing frustration at the end of the meeting that they had not accomplished even the first step toward solving their practical problems, "still had no one [he] could telephone" in any of AFS's three partner agencies to discuss even minor operational problems, whereupon the participants immediately agreed to constitute a committee of operations specialists that would meet independently of the Planning Committee. They called the new Operations Committee "The Dream Team" because it seemed that only as visionaries and dreamers could this committee make any progress.

The Dream Team succeeded. They began by solving relatively easy problems, such as producing a schedule of RCC life skills classes and inducing RCC to consolidate JOBS-related programming responsibilities in a single staff person. They

also induced the AFS district manager to accept this concept, which she previously had resisted on the grounds that an RCC coordinator might jeopardize AFS caseworker accountability for, and control over, the client. By April 1991 The Dream Team had strung together enough "small wins"[16] and had earned enough respect from the Planning Committee—including their own superiors—that responsibility gravitated even further in their direction.

Precisely how this gravitation process worked was subtle and was recounted somewhat differently by the various participants; what is certain is that all parties were sensitive to the perception that the new Operations Committee might be "usurping power." At the same time there was a growing understanding, even among Planning Committee members, that the Operations Committee was becoming a functional, effective instrument. The Planning Committee substantially stopped meeting, and the four "strong personalities" slowly backed out of the negotiating process altogether. By virtue of retirements or resignations all but the community college president had left the scene by the time I visited Medford in June 1992. New people also joined the Operations Committee during this period. By June 1992 the only key participant left from the era preceding the establishment of the Operations Committee was Ted Swigart, the AFS Medford branch manager.

Middle Managers and Group Dynamics

Technical expertise is one reason to favor middle managers over agency leaders as negotiators and planners. Another reason is that because there are more of them to choose from it is easier to select those personalities skilled at managing group dynamics and avoid those who are not. The "meltdown" of the Planning Committee in Medford, Oregon, illustrates an extreme case of poor group dynamics. However, in the range of most committee work the difference between very good and merely average group dynamics may be measured in fewer hours of meeting time, less personal frustration, and the production of creative solutions to common problems. Ted Swigart credits the relative success of the Operations Committee with unusually good group dynamics. The principal elements he regards as most significant include the following:

- At every meeting the group had a "facilitator," and responsibility for this function rotated.
- The order of rotation, according to Swigart, "was almost random, but in a sense, the person who needed to come to the fore did so, and seemed to move things along."
- Responsibility for taking minutes rotated.
- Copies of the minutes were sent promptly to all the participants, to their bosses from the Planning Committee, and to "everyone under the sun."

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[16]Small wins are reinforcing, build momentum, and clarify the problems still to be solved. See K. Weick, "Small Wins: Redefining the Scale of Social Problems," *American Psychologist* (1984): 40-49.

- Meetings were frequent and regular. Agendas were decided on at the outset, and priority items were discussed first.
- Individuals were discouraged from complaining about a problem without at the same time presenting thoughts about a possible solution.
- Individuals were encouraged to listen to others and allow themselves to be educated about the philosophical outlook of representatives from other agencies. They were also encouraged to learn about one another's administrative systems so that they could engage in joint problem-solving.
- At one meeting, two uninvited participants showed up to discuss a contentious issue. Their presence unsettled the group's evolving norms about constructive, informed participation. After this meeting, attendance was limited to invitees only, and few individuals received invitations.
- The cumulation of "small wins" created a helpful momentum. The group developed an esprit de corps, a shared pride in their collective achievements, and a sense of continuing collective responsibility for making the program run effectively.

In choosing people for their interpersonal skills, executives should look not only to personality but also to an individual's familiarity with others likely to be working on the same task.[17] In rural areas with stable populations, it might be relatively easy to tap networks based on long-standing community ties. In more urban areas, it may be possible to find individuals from different agencies who have dealt successfully with one another on projects in the past.[18] In either case, the executive responsible for appointments will have to balance the advantages of familiarity against the possible inequities involved in selecting from an "old boys' network."

Agency Leaders' Handicap in Collaboration

The advantages of middle managers as collaborators in interagency programs are accentuated by the disadvantages of agency leaders: The latter are likely to be more tenacious defenders of agency positions—under the circumstances, more parochial. This is because, for civil servants at least, the higher executives tend to personally benefit more from their agencies' successes than do middle managers; the higher

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[17]In a study of coordination between vocational education and JTPA agencies, researchers discovered that besides personality the factor most commonly mentioned by their informants as contributing to better coordination was familiarity. See W. N. Grubb, C. Brown, P. Kaufman, and J. Lederer, *Innovation Versus Turf: Coordination Between Vocational Education and Job Training Partnership Act Programs* (Berkeley: National Center for Research in Vocational Education, 1989), p. 36.

[18]See M. A. Levin and B. Ferman, *The Political Hand: Policy Implementation and Youth Employment Programs* (New York: Pergamon, 1985), pp. 104-5; and D. A. Lax and J. K. Sebenius, *The Manager as Negotiator: Bargaining for Cooperation and Competitive Gain* (New York: Free Press, 1986), p. 326. In Massachusetts, at the time the Employment and Training (ET) Choices Program was coming into being, the director of the Department of Public Welfare was married to the director of the Division of Employment Security—an unusually literal application of the "familiarity" principle. See Behn, 1991, pp. 193 and 211.

executives' careers are more dependent on the size, responsibilities, and budgets of their agencies. Middle managers have somewhat less to lose by switching to other agencies or even leaving government altogether—hence their readiness to compromise on budget, turf, and blame issues will often be greater than at higher levels in the organization, and their corresponding readiness to attend to technical problems of administrative cooperation and service delivery will be greater.[19]

Middle Managers' Risks

Knowing—or fearing—this willingness to compromise, agency leaders are not necessarily eager to turn responsibility over to the middle managers. Nor will middle managers necessarily be willing to accept it. One risk, evident in the Medford case, is that of being perceived as usurping authority. Another risk is that of being punished by one's superiors for failing to sufficiently uphold institutional interests or concerns—or at least for failing to appear to do so.[20] A staffer at The Jobs Council, for instance, who had been caught cooperating on such a simple problem as designing a reporting format, was obliged to send a memo to his negotiating partners that read: "I am not the JOBS team leader. I had assumed that function on a temporary basis only. [X] . . . is the JOBS team leader, effective on . . . " And whatever the actual degree of risk middle managers are running, their uncertainties may certainly exaggerate it.

Under conditions such as these, middle managers' willingness to compromise may be diminished, along with their creativity in searching for effective solutions to collective problems.[21] Moreover, they may become less willing to proceed without the time-consuming delays involved in checking back with their superiors about acceptable next steps. As a further consequence, more delays and greater caution could lead to escalating suspicions that the higher executives were using the middle managers to discover other parties' bargaining strategies rather than negotiating in good faith.

Agency executives who indeed wish negotiations to succeed can attempt to reduce the real and perceived risk to their delegates by supplying them with some form of mandate. In Medford, Oregon, this mandate to the group that became the Operations Committee was a powerful one, albeit not wholly intended: The history of executive-level failure and the charged atmosphere of the mediation sessions gave

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[19]However, because the concept of middle manager is often defined by expertise in coordination functions, their particular kinds of turf interests may sometimes be threatened by well-functioning interagency partnerships, which might eliminate some mid-level coordinating jobs. Also, middle managers' specialized knowledge about how to resolve certain organization-specific or program-specific administrative complexities may be less important in successful collaboratives.

[20]Of course, middle-manager delegates to an interagency Operations Committee *should* strive to represent the service objectives of their own agencies as well as search for a more encompassing set of goals. Kelman, 1992, argues that "a norm stressing eventual agreement, combined with high initial commitment to one's own views" more effectively fosters a problem-solving strategy than does a setting in which participants simply have comfortable ongoing relationships. See S. Kelman, "Adversary and Cooperationist Institutions for Conflict Resolution in Public Policymaking," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 11, no. 2 (1992): 178-206; quote on p. 195.

[21]Even in the best of circumstances, negotiators' flexibility is reduced when they represent constituent bodies, such as complex government institutions (Lax and Sebenius, 1986, p. 311).

presumptive legitimacy to almost *any* group that was ready and willing to take effective action. In other service districts in Oregon, the effective mandate to interagency work teams had come down from the highest executive level in the state in the form of Oregon's basic JOBS charter, the "Local Planning Guide: Jobs for Oregon's Future," which was backed by an evolving understanding among top administrators across the state and across many different agencies that collaboration was expected to occur.

Avoiding Risk-Avoiders

It cannot hurt to appoint to an interagency negotiating group individuals who are, if not exactly risk-takers, at least not risk-avoiders. One such person is good, but two or more are better; for it takes at least a second person to create the possibility of collaborative psychological support. And if one of them assumes a group leadership role, so much the better. In the Medford case, Ted Swigart, in conjunction with the Jobs Council representative, Jim Fong, seems to have functioned as the implicit (if somewhat surprised) leader. Swigart's moment of truth came when he decided to continue to push an idea opposed by his agency's district manager: "I said, 'I'm the one who's going to be responsible here as local manager, blamed or not based upon what I do, so I might as well do it my way.' If it doesn't work, it doesn't work. At least I'll know why I pay the price."

Swigart had a background in alcohol and drug abuse counseling. He describes himself as a person who had gotten used to being direct, if not confrontational, and to taking personal risks. Fong's background included some dramatic career changes before his arrival in November 1991 at The Jobs Council. Moreover, being new, his stakes in his current job and organization were low enough that he was willing to take further career risks.

The Education and Management of Contracts Officials

In the realm of interagency relations, agency contracts officers police the royal highways. If traffic is to move freely throughout the kingdom, the organizational practices and professional culture of this official establishment must be rightly disposed. Historically, however, because the main mission of contracts officers has been to oversee the maintenance of legal and fiscal integrity, they have emphasized stopping and searching vehicles on the highways more than facilitating the movement of traffic. Naturally, these practices often frustrate program managers. "At least they keep us out of jail" may be the kindest sentence a program manager will have to say about the contracts office in his or her agency.

The culture of fiscal integrity also incorporates, in practice if not in strict logic, a preference for cost minimization over performance enhancement. As noted above, the distaste for large contractor profits tilts the choice of contractual arrangements away from a basis in performance to that of cost-reimbursement. Moreover, once costs dominate the picture, only the "lowest cost" could become the criterion against which results should be measured.

One solution involves "working around" contracts officers: "Oh, X is a terrible pain in the neck, but when things get impossible, I'm on good terms with his boss and just bypass him," explained one manager. But this can be costly and infeasible

in too many situations. A more systemic approach would be to incorporate into the explicit mission of contracts officials the objective of helping to facilitate the achievement of program goals; help them understand how to do this; and reward them for their efforts.

In Riverside County, the GAIN program "enticed" the adult schools, as contracts official Jim Leach put it, into performance-based contracts that he fully expected to be "lucrative" for the schools in the early years. He need not fear recriminations for having done this because he had the full support of GAIN and DPSS top management, who also encouraged him in his active efforts to help the school districts financially and with technical assistance. Leach, in effect, became an associate partner of the top management team.

Probably the most important step in moving the contracting process in the direction of middle management is for top executives—at the level of the welfare agency director and perhaps even higher in the governmental structure—to appreciate that such a step is both possible and desirable. This involves learning to think of individuals in the "overhead," "control," or "staff" units of government not merely as alternately troublesome or useful bureaucrats, but as people who deserve to be educated and helped to do their jobs in a more constructive way. Following the idea of organizations as inverted pyramid structures, these bureaucrats should come to see themselves as delivering service to line agency managers, who in general should be thought of as their customers.

Although there are many barriers to such a shift in perception, it can be done. A recently published book, *Breaking Through Bureaucracy: A New Vision for Managing in Government*, explains how Minnesota moved in this direction over the last nine years.[22]

[22]See Barzelay, 1992.

Chapter 4

Conclusion: What to Do on Monday Morning

A JOBS program manager reading this paper is entitled to ask, "And so, what am I supposed to do Monday morning?" The answer depends somewhat on local circumstances, local policy objectives, and the personality of the manager. But most JOBS programs could probably achieve higher productivity if, like Riverside, they were to focus on a quantifiable set of goals and a process of setting them and tracking achievements that recognizes clients and line workers as the most important "producers" in the organization.

Doing these things entails some difficult organizational changes, however. Based on what I observed in my fieldwork and on conventional academic wisdom about organizational change, if I were the director of a JOBS program that had not been using goal-setting and outcome measurement very effectively I would begin the changes by assembling my inner circle of regional or district managers on Monday morning and making the following speech:

> Our JOBS program is doing well, but we seem to have reached a plateau in terms of the number of clients placed in employment per month. We are not losing ground, but we are not moving ahead either. Employment, of course, is not the only thing we care about here in Washington County. Education and training are important to our clients' long-term prospects of self-sufficiency, too. But employment is pivotal and often is a precondition for achieving many other goals, such as clients' self-esteem, the well-being of their children, and saving money for the taxpayers; and it is also a goal that many program components, such as remedial education, ought to lead up to.
>
> We should continue to focus on the employment goal, but we should be stretching ourselves to achieve more—without distorting our purpose by working only with the most employable clients. If we expect more of ourselves, chances are better that we'll achieve more.
>
> I do not propose here and now to set an exact target for job placements or GED completions (or grade-level advances in education), and I'm not ready to set timetables for achieving targets, either. What the targets and timetables should look like are questions I'd like you to help me decide. You are closer to the operational day-to-day problems, and you probably have a better feel for what is or isn't possible. In addition, we can't realistically figure out overall organizational placement and completion goals without also figuring out what each of your district offices and other major subunits can achieve, and whether we should set lower targets for more disadvantaged clients.
>
> Of course, you will have to consult with your supervisors and line staff. If we really want to make a breakthrough in our performance, we'll need to get *all* people in our agency thinking about system-level issues. These consultations should have a broad agenda; what we're about is improving the productivity of our JOBS programs. We should also think about how to improve our entire system of operations. For instance, can we find ways to reduce unnecessary

paperwork? What, if anything, should our training office be doing differently? Does anybody have ideas about how to communicate more effectively with line staff or managers in our partner agencies, the JTPA service providers and the adult schools? Could we improve our productivity if we reallocated some of our casework positions to job development out in the field?

Because we are asking people up and down the organization to be honest in their criticisms and suggestions, we need to offer some assurance that no one will be blamed or punished for what they have or haven't been doing. Nor will anyone be punished for drawing attention to problems; if we can't identify problems, we can't solve them. And we need to back these assurances with practical measures. You might find ways to allow the first round of criticisms and suggestions to be presented informally, in private conversations; however, I leave it to you to figure out exactly how to proceed.

As to setting targets, job placement goals for individual line workers and other performance standards are long-term objectives. Ideally we should be able to put in place a system of performance standards for line workers *and* managers that would include quarterly placement and completion quotas for the whole caseload, and other targets to help us stay on track for the least job-ready clients. For the moment, we need more experience taking goals and targets seriously, to stretch our collective effort and imagination. When the time comes for setting standards, we will attempt to do so in a way that everyone regards as fair and reasonable. I hope by then that our experience setting group-level program achievement targets will have proved reassuring.

This goal-setting process cannot be accomplished overnight. But to get things moving and keep on track we should set up some milestones. Two weeks from now every manager in this room should have explained to his or her supervisors and line staff that we are going to set challenging, realistic job placement targets and educational and training targets and do whatever it takes at every level to achieve them. Within six weeks, I expect you to propose average monthly targets for the whole caseload and goals for the more disadvantaged groups; and at least two or three candidate ideas for organizational change that would help improve productivity.

What we are about to undertake should be regarded as an experiment. It would be surprising if in the long run what we do turns out to have been *the* best way to improve our productivity; most likely we will want to modify procedures as we see fit, repeating the process every few months to better plan future objectives. So, in addition to telling me in six weeks' time what goals you should have in your units and which short-run changes we should consider, I want from each of you suggestions about how to improve the consultative process so that next time we can do it even better.

There is a danger that these ideas of goal-setting and system-improvement will be viewed as more threatening than they really are, or as just another piece of management nonsense that eventually will go away. It's your job, however, to see to it that the changes under way are taken seriously and that the reasons for them are understood by your supervisors and line workers. You will have to

become even more skilled at communication.

I would guess that one of the hardest things to learn how to do is to come up with responsible, useful ideas about changes in the organization that might help people work better. Unfortunately, it's in the nature of bureaucracies that people at the lowest levels get used to thinking that they have nothing to contribute and that management does not want to listen. It would not be surprising, then, if the first round of criticisms and suggestions from our front-line staff vented plenty of frustration and proposed a lot of pie-in-the-sky changes. But in my view that means we managers have a hard education job ahead of us. If the staff aren't able to make the most constructive contributions initially, we'll have to be more energetic and creative in finding ways to help them.

Any thoughts about any of this?

Selected MDRC Publications

WELFARE-TO-WORK PROGRAMS

From Welfare to Work (Russell Sage Foundation). Book. 1991. Judith M. Gueron, Edward Pauly. A synthesis of research findings on the effectiveness of welfare-to-work programs. Chapter 1, which is the summary of the book, is also published separately by MDRC.

Reforming Welfare with Work (Ford Foundation). Monograph. 1987. Judith M. Gueron. A review of welfare-to-work initiatives in five states.

Papers for Practitioners

Assessing JOBS Participants: Issues and Trade-offs. 1992. Patricia Auspos, Kay Sherwood. Lessons from employment and training programs for assessment in JOBS.

Linking Welfare and Education: A Study of New Programs in Five States. 1992. Edward Pauly, David Long, Karin Martinson. Key issues in providing education services to welfare recipients.

Working Papers

Child Support Enforcement: A Case Study. 1993. Dan Bloom.

Learning from the Voices of Mothers: Single Mothers' Perceptions of the Trade-offs Between Welfare and Work. 1993. LaDonna Pavetti.

Unpaid Work Experience for Welfare Recipients: Findings and Lessons from MDRC Research. 1993. Thomas Brock, David Butler, David Long.

The GAIN Evaluation

An evaluation of California's Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) Program, which is currently operating as the state's JOBS program and features upfront basic education as well as job search and other activities.

GAIN: Planning and Early Implementation. 1987. John Wallace, David Long.

GAIN: Child Care in a Welfare Employment Initiative. 1989. Karin Martinson, James Riccio.

GAIN: Early Implementation Experiences and Lessons. 1989. James Riccio, Barbara Goldman, Gayle Hamilton, Karin Martinson, Alan Orenstein.

GAIN: Participation Patterns in Four Counties. 1991. Stephen Freedman, James Riccio.

GAIN: Program Strategies, Participation Patterns, and First-Year Impacts in Six Counties. 1992. James Riccio, Daniel Friedlander.

GAIN: Two-Year Impacts in Six Counties. 1993. Daniel Friedlander, James Riccio, Stephen Freedman.

GAIN: Basic Education in a Welfare-to-Work Program. Forthcoming. Karin Martinson, Daniel Friedlander.

The JOBS Evaluation

An evaluation of welfare-to-work programs operating under the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) provisions of the Family Support Act of 1988.

From Welfare to Work (Russell Sage Foundation). Book. 1991. Judith M. Gueron, Edward Pauly. See description above.

The Evaluation of Florida's Project Independence

An evaluation of Florida's JOBS program.

Florida's Project Independence: Program Implementation, Participation Patterns, and First-Year Impacts. Forthcoming. James Kemple, Joshua Haimson.

The Saturation Work Initiative Model (SWIM)

A test of the feasibility and effectiveness of an ongoing participation requirement in a welfare-to-work program.

Final Report on the Saturation Work Initiative Model in San Diego. 1989. Gayle Hamilton, Daniel Friedlander.

The Saturation Work Initiative Model in San Diego: A Five-Year Follow-up Study. 1993. Daniel Friedlander, Gayle Hamilton.

The Demonstration of State Work/Welfare Initiatives

A test of the feasibility and effectiveness of various state employment initiatives for welfare recipients.

Arizona: *Preliminary Management Lessons from the WIN Demonstration Program.* 1984. Kay Sherwood.

Arkansas: *Interim Findings from the Arkansas WIN Demonstration Program.* 1984. Janet Quint.

Final Report on the WORK Program in Two Counties. 1985. Daniel Friedlander, Gregory Hoerz, Janet Quint, James Riccio.

Employment and Welfare Impacts of the Arkansas WORK Program: A Three-Year Follow-up Study in Two Counties. 1988. Daniel Friedlander, Barbara Goldman.

California: *Preliminary Findings from the San Diego Job Search and Work Experience Demonstration.* 1984. Barbara Goldman, Judith Gueron, Joseph Ball, Marilyn Price.

Findings from the San Diego Job Search and Work Experience Demonstration. 1985. Barbara Goldman, Daniel Friedlander, Judith Gueron, David Long.

Final Report on the San Diego Job Search and Work Experience Demonstration. 1986. Barbara Goldman, Daniel Friedlander, David Long.

Illinois: *Interim Findings from the WIN Demonstration Program in Cook County.* 1986. Janet Quint, Cynthia Guy.

Final Report on Job Search and Work Experience in Cook County. 1987. Daniel Friedlander, Stephen Freedman, Gayle Hamilton, Janet Quint.

Maine: *Interim Findings from a Grant Diversion Program.* 1985. Patricia Auspos.
Final Report on the Training Opportunities in the Private Sector Program. 1988. Patricia Auspos, George Cave, David Long.

Maryland: *Interim Findings from the Maryland Employment Initiatives Programs.* 1984. Janet Quint.
Final Report on the Employment Initiatives Evaluation. 1985. Daniel Friedlander, Gregory Hoerz, David Long, Janet Quint.
Supplemental Report on the Baltimore Options Program. 1987. Daniel Friedlander.

New Jersey: *Final Report on the Grant Diversion Project.* 1988. Stephen Freedman, Jan Bryant, George Cave.

Virginia: *Interim Findings from the Virginia Employment Services Program.* 1985. Marilyn Price.
Final Report on the Virginia Employment Services Program. 1986. James Riccio, George Cave, Stephen Freedman, Marilyn Price.

West Virginia: *Interim Findings on the Community Work Experience Demonstrations.* 1984. Joseph Ball.
Final Report on the Community Work Experience Demonstrations. 1986. Daniel Friedlander, Marjorie Erickson, Gayle Hamilton, Virginia Knox.

Other Reports on the Demonstration of State Work/Welfare Initiatives

Workfare: The Impact of the Reagan Program on Employment and Training. 1983. MDRC.
Documentation of the Data Sources and Analytical Methods Used in the Benefit-Cost Analysis of the EPP/EWEP Program in San Diego. 1985. David Long, Virginia Knox.
Relationship Between Earnings and Welfare Benefits for Working Recipients: Four Area Case Studies. 1985. Barbara Goldman, Edward Cavin, Marjorie Erickson, Gayle Hamilton, Darlene Hasselbring, Sandra Reynolds.
Welfare Grant Diversion: Early Observations from Programs in Six States. 1985. Michael Bangser, James Healy, Robert Ivry.
A Survey of Participants and Worksite Supervisors in the New York City Work Experience Program. 1986. Gregory Hoerz, Karla Hanson.
Welfare Grant Diversion: Lessons and Prospects. 1986. Michael Bangser, James Healy, Robert Ivry.
Work Initiatives for Welfare Recipients: Lessons from a Multi-State Experiment. 1986. Judith Gueron.

The Subgroup/Performance Indicator Study

A study of the impacts of selected welfare-to-work programs on subgroups of the AFDC caseload.

A Study of Performance Measures and Subgroup Impacts in Three Welfare Employment Programs. 1987. Daniel Friedlander, David Long.
Subgroup Impacts and Performance Indicators for Selected Welfare Employment Programs. 1988. Daniel Friedlander.

The Self-Employment Investment Demonstration (SEID)

A test of the feasibility of operating a program to encourage self-employment among recipients of AFDC.

Self-Employment for Welfare Recipients: Implementation of the SEID Program. 1991. Cynthia Guy, Fred Doolittle, Barbara Fink.

The WIN Research Laboratory Project

A test of innovative service delivery approaches in four Work Incentive Program (WIN) offices.

Immediate Job Search Assistance: Preliminary Results from the Louisville WIN Research Laboratory Project. 1980. Barbara Goldman.

Preliminary Research Findings: WIN Research Laboratory Project. 1980. MDRC.

Final Report on WIN Services to Volunteers: Denver WIN Research Laboratory Project. 1981. Ellen Slaughter, Paulette Turshak, Gale Whiteneck, Edward Baumheier.

Impacts of the Immediate Job Search Assistance Experiment: Louisville WIN Research Laboratory Project. 1981. Barbara Goldman.

The Workings of WIN: A Field Observation Study of Three Local Offices. 1981. Sydelle Levy.

Welfare Women in a Group Job Search Program: Their Experiences in the Louisville WIN Research Laboratory Project. 1982. Joanna Gould-Stuart.

The WIN Labs: A Federal/Local Partnership in Social Research. 1982. Joan Leiman.

Job Search Strategies: Lessons from the Louisville WIN Laboratory. 1983. Carl Wolfhagen, Barbara Goldman.

PROGRAMS FOR TEENAGE PARENTS ON WELFARE

The LEAP Evaluation

An evaluation of Ohio's Learning, Earning, and Parenting (LEAP) Program, which uses financial incentives to encourage teenage parents on welfare to stay in or return to school.

LEAP: Implementing a Welfare Initiative to Improve School Attendance Among Teenage Parents. 1991. Dan Bloom, Hilary Kopp, David Long, Denise Polit.

LEAP: Interim Findings on a Welfare Initiative to Improve School Attendance Among Teenage Parents. 1993. Dan Bloom, Veronica Fellerath, David Long, Robert Wood.

The New Chance Demonstration

A test of a comprehensive program of services that seeks to improve the economic status and general well-being of a group of highly disadvantaged young women and their children.

New Chance: Implementing a Comprehensive Program for Disadvantaged Young Mothers and Their Children. 1991. Janet Quint, Barbara Fink, Sharon Rowser.

Lives of Promise, Lives of Pain: Young Mothers After New Chance. Monograph. Forthcoming. Janet Quint, Judith Musick, with Joyce Ladner.

Project Redirection

A test of a comprehensive program of services for pregnant and parenting teenagers.

The Challenge of Serving Teenage Mothers: Lessons from Project Redirection. Monograph. 1988. Denise Polit, Janet Quint, James Riccio.

The Community Service Projects

A test of a New York State teenage pregnancy prevention and services initiative.

The Community Service Projects: A New York State Adolescent Pregnancy Initiative. 1986. Cynthia Guy.

The Community Service Projects: Final Report on a New York State Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention and Services Program. 1988. Cynthia Guy, Lawrence Bailis, David Palasits, Kay Sherwood.

THE PARENTS' FAIR SHARE DEMONSTRATION

A demonstration aimed at reducing child poverty by increasing the job-holding, earnings, and child support payments of unemployed, noncustodial parents (usually fathers) of children receiving public assistance.

Caring and Paying: What Fathers and Mothers Say About Child Support. 1992. Frank Furstenberg, Jr., Kay Sherwood, Mercer Sullivan.

Child Support Enforcement: A Case Study. Working Paper. 1993. Dan Bloom.

THE NATIONAL JTPA STUDY

A study of 16 local programs under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), the nation's job training system for low-income individuals.

Implementing the National JTPA Study. 1990. Fred Doolittle, Linda Traeger.

The National JTPA Study: Site Characteristics and Participation Patterns. 1993. James Kemple, Fred Doolittle, John Wallace.

A Summary of the Design and Implementation of the National JTPA Study. 1993. Fred Doolittle.

About MDRC

The Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) is a nonprofit social policy research organization founded in 1974 and located in New York City and San Francisco. Its mission is to design and rigorously field-test promising education and employment-related programs aimed at improving the well-being of disadvantaged adults and youth, and to provide policymakers and practitioners with reliable evidence on the effectiveness of social programs. Through this work, and its technical assistance to program administrators, MDRC seeks to enhance the quality of public policies and programs. MDRC actively disseminates the results of its research through its publications and through interchange with policymakers, administrators, practitioners, and the public.

Over the past two decades—working in partnership with more than forty states, the federal government, scores of communities, and numerous private philanthropies—MDRC has developed and studied more than three dozen promising social policy initiatives.

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